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WITCH OF THE 19TH CENTURY

THE BIGOTS

WHO PERSECUTE THE HONORED MEDIUMS OF TO-DAY, HUNG THE SO-CALLED SALEM WITCHES.

BY W. P. Phelon, M.D. AUTHOR OF "FUTURE RULERS OF AMERICA," "HERMETIC TEACHINGS," "THREE SEVENS," ETC.

1892

A WITCH

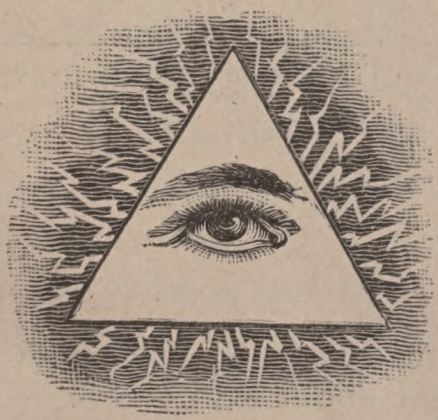
OF THE

NINETEENTH CENTURY,

..... BY .....

W. P. PHELON, M. D.,

Author of "FUTURE RULERS OF AMERICA," "HERMETIC TEACHINGS," "THREE SEVENS," ETC.



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A WITCH OF THE 19TH CENTURY.

CHAPTER I.

IT is early in the fifties. A traveler on the west coast of England, in passing through one of the little villages that are ever dodging out of the distance, could have seen in the month of June this picture: A thatched cottage, in all its lowliness really a thing of beauty to the artistic eye. It stands a little apart, evidently a freeholding, the property of some honest yeoman, of the class whose brain and brawn have raised up the England of to-day out of the darkness of savagery. It is set back quite a little distance from the street, as if hiding in sweet retirement, like a coy maiden from her lover. Its brown, thatched roof overhangs on either side. Here the sparrows have built their nests, and now, busied in the care of their young, twitter all day long. Here are also visible the green patches of the scientifically named plant *sem-*

pervivium, but endeared to every old-fashioned English heart as "hen and chickens." Under its motherly, strong leaves, it protects the tender little ones from harm. There is also a superstition attached to this plant that its presence is a protection from lightning-stroke.

Higher up, from out the thatch peep the gabled windows, with their numerous diamond-shaped window-panes. The whole window swings back at will, letting in the perfumed air, sweet with the breath of many flowers, while up over the brick walls in graceful rivalry clamber from the lap of mother earth to the sunshine the woodbine and the rose, until breathless in great masses of fragrant color, they lie on the very peak of the thatch. The gabled end toward the street has the front entrance over it; facing toward the west is a roomy, shady porch, whose vine-embowered beauty conceals from the casual passer the steps on either side, brown with age, well-worn with the imprint of generations of little feet as they clambered up and down to get into grandpa's lap. Many and many are the tales of love that have been breathed forth and partings sighed in that quiet spot. None have been witnessed, however, save by the nightingale in the hedge, or the bees, whose ceaseless

hum never ends during the sunny hours. All the nooks, corners and hiding places, and the windows, full of fresh, well tended plants, are mute witnesses of tender, watchful care from the loving hands who occupy that quiet home.

The traveler is thirsty, and takes the liberty to walk up the graveled path and ask a drink of water from the iron-bound bucket attached to the great sweep close to the back door. Open windows and doors show the roomy kitchen, with clean, white, stone floor, on one side the fireplace, with the backlog of the morning fire still glowing within it. As the sunshine pours in, it is reflected back in a thousand lights from the bright utensils on the wall. Near the fireplace are the ancient, high-backed settles, so protecting to their occupants from draughts, and a favorite resort of the family when the work of a winter's day is done. The old eight-day clock upon the stairs, with its moon-faced dial, ticks audibly throughout the whole house. The only part of the cottage in which darkness and the silence of death reigns supreme is the parlor, dedicated to Christmas, weddings, christenings and the last loving tribute we can offer to the spirit called to the home we cannot see. This sanctuary of the deepest emotions is suitably

furnished with the most lugubrious and uncomfortable furniture possible.

Back of the house is a thrifty orchard of apple, pear and plum trees, which give the most ample promise that in due time their spreading branches will droop with a heavy burden of ripening fruit. Out by the well stands a majestic elm, lifting its giant head heavenward. From out its leafy covert the song of the early bird greets the occupants of the cottage. Then there are beds of the old-fashioned flowers our grandmothers loved so well—London-pride, sweet-lavender, rosemary, southernwood, eglantine and myrtle, and hints that the early spring had brought gifts of violet and snowdrop. In the midst of these was an arbor, suggesting cozy teas under the leafy shelter of the green billows of jessamine, clematis and roses.

This tidy homestead had been the abiding place of four generations. Here they had been born, grew up and passed hence, leaving possession to the next of kin; and now he who was the last owner in fee was sitting in the roomy porch with his "gude" wife, resting from the toils of the day.

They had been a twelve month married. The father had within that time passed on his way, leaving the son alone, so far as any living

relative was concerned. The wife was an orphan when she married, so there was little except warm friendships that held them to English soil. The man stretched upon the broad settle, was smoking; the woman, also resting after the womanly fashion, was knitting as she slowly rocked in a low, high-backed rocker. Woman is tireless in behalf of those she loves; evening, morning, noon or night, constant as the needle to the pole turns ever her thought to her loved ones and their best good.

The man was quiet, and evidently thinking of some more than usually serious matter. The faces of both told even the most casual observer that they could think.

"Thomas," said the wife, "what troubles you? It is not often that you are so long quiet."

"Nothing troubles, lass; but old man Williams had a letter from his son John, he that went out to America, you know the day. He says that one can get a freehold of one hundred and sixty acres almost for the clearing of it."

"Yes, and lose his scalp by some of the savages, if he does not mind," was the quick retort."

"But the savages are not everywhere, and sure, one could somewhere find some land where he could make a home for thee, and, please God, the lads and lasses; it is of their chance I'm thinking."

The wife looked up, a little wave of color mounting over the clear red and white of her complexion. She had not been so long married that the new had become entirely old.

"I know, lad, they are not so crowded over there, and if you really desire to try a new country, I certainly will not hold back."

"Thou'rt a good wife, Jane, we'll not make a leap in the dark, but I'll find out more about it."

The next and many following days were used to extend information of the El Dorado beyond the western waters, where it was possible for a poor man to own the land he worked, for himself, he and his heirs forever. Satisfied at last of that which at the first had borne itself into his mind, he made the few and simple preparations necessary, finding quick sale for his holding at a fair price, with all the personal property. Then ready for his departure, he and his good wife turned their faces toward the country whose hospitable shores welcomed alike the righteous and

the unrighteous; their whole store of savings being a little less than four hundred pounds sterling.

Standing upon the deck of the outgoing vessel, they looked back upon the cruel mother of a pugnacious, persistent offspring, and England had forever lost another portion of the sturdy Saxon which has made her what she is.

There were no tears in the eyes of either, for why should they weep in leaving the scene of toil and the prospective bondage for their children, of moneyed caste, if perchance they might receive in exchange the birthright of every soul born into the world, "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?"

Underneath the stolid appearance of both this man and woman was a finer perception than ordinary of the things which are not always recognized as of any consequence, even by the more cultured. The seen and tangible has very little use for the unseen. They were both psychics covered over with the crust of circumstances, and only waiting the touch of unseen fingers to develop.

The voyage was made with the usual events, nothing noteworthy occurring. As Mr. Williams' son, the friend of the Holmes', was

located near the Chicago settlement, and land could be, at that time, bought cheaply in Cook county, they, too, had fixed their destination there. Over the then scarcely traveled routes, so soon to become the highways for the feet of untold millions, they finally reached their destination in the fall of 1853.

Through the kind offices of his old friend, a neighboring quarter-section could be had at a reasonable price. Before the cold weather set in a three-roomed frame house added its attractions to the increasing value of the neighborhood.

Could not these two pioneers into a new country be pardoned a little pride in their accomplishment as they surveyed the work which had grown so successfully and continuously under their hands?

It was their own one hundred and sixty acres of arable land, all paid for, not to mention the ten acres of timber over on the Desplaines river, which was to furnish fuel for the first winter and work for Thomas during the cold weather, while waiting and preparing for the coming of the seed-time.

Industrious, thrifty and healthy, with mental powers above the average, it was not strange that all nature's forces waited on them

but to serve. In the language of their neighbors, they seemed to have a patent right on good luck; but they were so genial, so genuinely kind to all, that envy did not darken their living. Mr. Holmes was a lineal descendant from a younger brother of a family of renown, but the branch long ago cut off from the parent stem had dried up and withered, and as the rest of the family had been remarkably strong and prolific, the chances for the minor branches to receive profit or benefit from their connection seemed very slim indeed. Nor had Thomas Holmes ever indulged in any day dreams. Honest in purpose, strong in integrity and persistent in purpose, it was enough for him to be allowed to carve out a destiny for himself and wife and the family which might be put in his keeping.

Although brought up under the training of the Church of England, he was very liberal in his views, both in regard to this present and the future life; age and experience only broadened the field of his spiritual perception. This growth was stimulated by the constant promptings of the unseen intelligences which were constantly molding and guiding him to the crowning work of his life.

For two years husband and wife toiled to

lay deep and permanently the foundations of their home. Fortune smiled; everything they touched prospered. Whatever of disagreeableness came to their neighbors they were not sharers. Whatever they had to sell was put opportunely upon the market, and brought the best prices. At length, there came to each, foreknowledge of an event desired by both. While we are waiting for the advent upon the mimic stage of life, of another actor, let us go into the room behind the scenes.

CHAPTER II.

ONE night Thomas was awakened by his wife, who said she had had a wonderful vision, which she at once proceeded to relate to him; but during the relation she did not seem like herself either in manner, voice or language; for like one entranced by the marvelous beauty of what she saw, she went on as follows:

"Can you not see those peaks, crowned with an ineffable, glorious light, or the vast plains that lie between, over which are scattered forests and grassy meads and sparkling waters? All over as far as the eye can reach are beauty and harmony and peace. Tones of color ravishing to the eye, symphonies of melody that lift the soul into the highest vibrations possible, and a wonderful penetrating, subtle fragrance flood and permeate the whole being; every sense, every thought, is etherealized. The sense of enjoyment is intense; all the more because we feel sure there will be no reaction, no rebate demanded. No longer has the spirit to pay toll to the animal for imperfect service grudgingly rendered. This is the Summer-

land, the land of beauty and joy and peace and accomplishment; the rest remaining for those who desire it.

"Do you see those gates opening inward? Look! they are opening, and one enters who is evidently unfamiliar with her present surroundings, but though a stranger, she shows no signs of fear—on the contrary, joy spreads over her serene face. A form brilliant in purity approaches and greets her; a glad recognition lights up the whole face of the newcomer. 'My daughter, oh, my daughter!' The mother-love restrained for years breaks forth, a great torrent of gladness at this meeting so long anticipated by both; the one engaged in the pleasant duties of the higher life that brought no sting of disappointment at their completion, the other plodding along the dull round of earth's monotony. Let us draw near; perhaps the daughter may answer a question or two.

"Upon our approach the elder in Spirit life turns her fine face toward me, and, in answer to my query, says:

"'The gates are the entrance through the veil that separates the seen from the unseen; they swing but one way, and that is inward; those who go hence do not go this way; this

is only for those who come into this state or condition; those who go hence have their method of exit; I will call for you a guide, if you desire to know that.'

" 'I should very much like to know,' I reply.

"Her bright face for a moment grew almost stern, then as the shadow of the cloud passes over the meadows, so the sunniness came back to her face.

" 'I have called, and he will come presently,' she said.

" 'But I do not understand,' I remarked.

"A little laugh like the thrill of a bird's song, and her clear tones went on again: 'I have been here only twenty years, so I know but just a little. I had all my earth training to unlearn after I came here. But dear mother, who could not help becoming a Spiritualist after I left her, understands more, and can begin in the first reader instead of in the alphabet. Oh, Marmie! I am so glad you have come.' A caress and a joy in both faces which was indescribable, and the daughter continued: 'In the earth-life, you say thoughts are things, but you cannot see them, feel them, nor hear them until they are in some fashion clothed with physical drapery; so you do not get the full force of the meaning of the phrase.

But on this plane we can sense thought and nothing else. Even you, mortal and earth-bound, are not here in body, but in your thought, and when we seek to know of our friends still upon the earth, we do not seek the physical bodies, but only the thought bodies, which they have built as a model for themselves to manifest upon in that plane. Here all is thought, we are the thought-forms of the One who is the Cause of All.'

" 'But what is this I see on every hand about us, this beauty of color and fragrance and form?' I asked.

" 'It is the prevailing harmonious condition of the plane of vibrations upon which you are now resting,' she replied. 'Whatever you think of earnestly here becomes visible to you just as you think it; and as we all desire harmony and peace, so it is. If we desire the presence of any acquaintance or friend, we think of them intently for a few minutes, then they come to us, drawn by our intense wish.'

" 'But where in space are we?' I asked wonderingly.

" Just then a form majestic, with a face full of power and knowledge, seemed to join our group out of the apparent nothingness. His coming was as when one comes to us in dreams

without warning. He bowed gravely, and the spirit with whom I had been talking said:

"'I refer your question for answer to my teacher here, as also the other unanswered thoughts in your mind.'

"He smiled benignantly upon me, and laid his hand gently upon my head. Instantly a misty cloud seemed to lift, and I saw we were standing in the darkened chamber of death, where robed for burial lay the empty tenement but a short time since vacated by her whose entrance into Spirit-life I had witnessed.

"A faint sigh trembled on the air, formulating the words: 'Why did I not insist upon the cremation of my body? Had I been certain that I should be held by it, so that travel would be impossible until it was consumed, I should have insisted upon liberation at once.' I recognized the voice of the mother. Looking to my friend, I asked: 'Is this so?'

"'Yes,' he replied; 'you see the Summerland is not a place, but simply a condition, just as different people in the same room may be very happy and very miserable at exactly the same moment of time. The condition of their own thought decides the matter for them. We do not go away to find heaven. Death simply puts us outside instead of inside the bolts

and bars. But,' turning to me, 'you seek the entrance into earth-life from the Summerland. Lay your hand in mine, and perhaps the vision will be given you. I must tell you, however, that souls seeking return from their own anxiety and the reflex action of the earth-life often change very much their own surroundings. Do not be disappointed in seeing the chilling effect of the earth on the Summerland.'

"So saying he extended his right hand and I placed mine within it. Hardly had I felt his warm clasp strongly close over it, when the cloudiness which had settled over me again cleared.

"I saw inclining with a gentle slope away from where we stood a vast valley. Over this brooded a grayish light, as when from the hidden sun its rays struggle through thick masses of vapor. But in this weird light there was no change, only the same awful monotony.

"There were trees in the valley, and their foliage seemed but a bluish, flame-like exhalation shimmering in a phosphorescent light. Plants could also be distinguished. Their formation was strange, intermixed and interblended like the fanciful lines of a monogram, containing all the parts of a species or family, as if the

whole range of thought-change possible were here condensed or crystalized against the time of recall into manifestation on earth. Their blossoms appeared to be cut out of gems of most brilliant hue, leaves of emerald and topaz, calyxes of garnet, of amethyst or chrysophras, daisies of diamonds, lotuses of most unimaginable wonders, and in all and through all a suppression of fiery power and change, that even in this ghastly light, foretold how the desert upon which this crystalized thought should fall, would blossom like the vale of Cashmere.

"But through the whole length and breadth of this dreadful valley no song of bird, nor hum of bee, nor sound of any living thing pulsates within the dead, heavy silence, nor is there any wind even to shake the trees and plants. It is the silence which precedes by perpetual condition, the re-creation of man upon the earth; which to the living, questioning man returns no answer to the query, 'Whence come I?' This is the consummation of the absorption of all earthly experience; nothing of the earth is here, for within these bounds the spiritualized souls alone await return to an earth-life to which hoary ages have bound upon them.

"At the farther end, a great lake fills the whole space; no glad stream flowing down the

mountain sides plunges madly into bounding, sounding water, but the whole is a solemn mass of white vapor, which, while in grave monotony it rolls over the feet of the mountains, wets neither them nor the base of promontories, nor the shores of the shining islands, around whom it is wound like a glittering scarf.

"'That sea,' says my guide, 'on its lower side, touches the earth.'

"But there is motion here, soundless motion. Forms flit across this ghostly lake of vapor. They resemble in formation the foamy substance in which they are constantly rising and sinking. Along the dreary shores they also flit, nor have their surroundings aught of influence or impression upon those pallid, waiting dreamers. Between a past and finished life, and the possibilities of a new earthly existence, they are dreaming, and planning, and hoping; comparing the last and only remembered with the coming next, before the word of the Inexorable, 'Go and forget,' shall bear them into the fierce struggle of planetary life once more. Whatsoever hidden springs of action are coiled within their Egos, they themselves know not.

"In dream-like change my guide and I are borne closer and closer, until I can see clearly, if anything wrought out of mist can be clear,

the distinguishing features of these restless ghosts. To one in particular I am especially attracted. The sedateness of his features was almost of one who had finished his re-births. I thought: 'Oh, if I could only speak to it!'

"'Thou mayest,' said my guide, answering my thought. 'It waits yet a little, but will gladly give thee thought-transference, for no speech is needed here.' So approaching, the being saluted courteously and sadly, and then this discourse was borne in upon my soul, fluently and eloquently."

CHAPTER III.

ON that portion of the maps of the earth's surface named the Western Hemisphere can be found an immense island-studded sea, and an almost land-locked gulf. Into this gulf stretches a nearly perfect parallelogram, the peninsula of Yucatan.

"'So long ago that history fades into the hoary mists of tradition, the gulf was an inland lake. Where the islands now show themselves amid the blue waters, a continent sunned itself in the light of blazing days.

"'This continent was peopled by the Aryan race. Its latitude teemed with all needed conditions to make exotic life most desirable, whether such life was on the animal or vegetable plane. The population increased and multiplied until the whole broad land became one vast city. Temples and palaces, works of skill and art, abounded everywhere. These did not there represent the slow toil of human sweat and agony, of brute force tyranized into sulky compliance. Brilliant in design and bold in execution, they were the manifestation of soul-power over elemental force.

The worship of the one God was taught. To those who desired, training for the acquisition of the most occult and mystic knowledge ever known to men was possible.

"'They who had charge of these departments as keepers of the keys and treasuries of knowledge were neither unaware nor regardless of the fact of other planes of existence upon the earth. For thousands of years they strove earnestly to better all states of their fellowmen by imparting a knowledge of the truth.

"'By the silent thought the whole people were lifted grade by grade as rapidly as they could assimilate the instructions which are of so much influence and assistance in the duties and pleasures of life. Just as fast as they could be educated to perceive these facts, they were advanced in the scale of existence.

"'It is true of all peoples, nations, kindreds and tongues, that in proportion as the lower classes rise from a given starting point toward the light, the force generated by their action will lift those who are sensitive and fit still farther above them. It is better to be the wise men of a nation of philosophers than the learned of a race of cringing slaves.

"'It was not strange, therefore, that these of whom I speak should have held the mightiest secrets of the universe in their keeping. It was not strange that the trackless wastes of water in unknown seas became to them familiar paths, nor that the mysteries of the earth, of the air and of all nature were at their command. The archives of all ancient nations, carved in their books of stone, speak clearly and truly of them. In Egypt, in Assyria, in India, are found the same inscriptions, conveying the same knowledge, that is to-day locked up in the ruined cities covered by the forests of thousands of years in Yucatan.

"'The western lamp of knowledge was never lighted from the east. From the proud seagirt continent of Atlantis went forth, as from the sun, to all parts of the earth under the heavens, the illumination of truth and knowledge.

"'The old Atlantians, going forth in their galleys hither and yon, so controlled the elements by their knowledge of the hidden laws of nature that they had no need to wait for the moving of the winds nor tides. Like Christos, who, in the storm, stilled the waves and bade them be at peace, and immediately

they were at the place whither they were going, so the Atlantians moved over the wide wilderness of waters on the earth, scattering the seeds of their knowledge along the shores they visited. These seeds fell into good ground in Egypt, Chaldea and India.

"'It can be noted wherever the pressure of the ever recurring demands of the physical —that never yielding circle of necessity—was least on the matter over which the spirit sought to maintain domination, meanwhile sinking deeper and deeper into its illusions with the downward rush of the cycle, there the seeds of truth took root and grew most vigorously. At such points were more leisure, strength and purpose to bring forth, as fruit the knowledge of the unseen in its greatest perfection and abundance. Spirit domination is a tropical fruit reaching mature perfection only in those countries where the bountiful earth ministers voluntarily, always anticipating man's physical necessities. Sun-cooked food does not stimulate groveling desires.

"'The dwellers in more rigorous latitudes, who, in spite of opposing force, still gain spiritual elevation for themselves, are richer in strength and force. This is the result of

the discipline acquired in the overcoming of the natural obstacles of their environment. The harder the battle the more important the victory. So long as Atlantis obeyed the law that makes all men gods in wisdom, so long it prospered mightily. But there came at last a time when they who had the knowledge only in trust, permitted themselves to think, to wish and to plan for grasping the absolute control of the whole earth. In this they sought to climb into the seat and place of the Supreme. Beyond the earth lies only the universe. The lesser is but the result of the greater.

"'The One denies no one knowledge. Whoever seeks to take from it, its authority, its supremacy, thus attempting arrogation or absorption into the Oneness in any other than the appointed ways which lie open to all created beings, shows a taint of grossness inspiring the desire, surely provocative of swift destruction. They who had thus planned were powerful far beyond the conception of the mortal, holding at their option all the secrets of nature save one, that one embracing the infinite supremacy of the One.

"'These leaders had freely scattered knowledge abroad upon the earth. By self denial

and long training they had attained, and yet at almost the supreme moment, dazzled by the brightness of the illumination, they looked once again toward self. From their memories faded out the unchanging law: 'Thus far and no farther, shalt thou go.' The ceaseless breaking of the waves of the mighty sea against the silent resistance of rock-bound coasts, ceased to utter its warning to dazed mentality. The on-coming day, beginning of the end to those who had forgotten the very life and essence of the One, was at hand. The proud city of Atlantis, city and continent one, sitting as a queen upon the throne of the waters, had, by arrogant presumption, filled full the cup of wrath, for which expiation must be made. They—masters of all the elements and all lawful knowledge of the unseen—now sought the forbidden, as if the part should demand equality with the whole. Step by step they had reached the veil separating them from the whiteness of the Immediate Presence; and now, as the last fatal step, they had determined by the exercise of their most potent skill to rend the veil and come unheralded and unsummoned before the face of It whom no man hath seen at any time.

"'Carefully were their preparations made,

most accurately were the sacred computations wrought out to decide the auspicious hour. Panoplied with the consciousness of previous achievement, their call to the embattled hosts of the universe rang out along the astral currents. Confidently the word of power was spoken in all the pride of human will. The expected accomplishment did not follow. To their amazed horror they discerned a new vibration, a resultant of creative thought in its own defence. To this they had no key, and first bewildered, then terrified, they perceived that the immense force momentarily unbound by their own act, had destroyed the accurate balance and adjustment of nature's laws. Utterly without resource, they waited for the outcome.

"'Thus knowing the inner, behold the outer. The sun rises in its eastern splendor. The mighty millions who dwelt in palaces and temples, in luxury and frugality, dream not of nor can they understand the word of the Omnipotent, already spoken and gone forth whereunto it was sent. They awake to their life of ease and pleasure with the self-assurance that the thing existing hitherto will still continue to be. In their hearts they say: 'Have we not compelling power and force? Sufficient for the

day is the evil thereof.' They pass on, without concern, to their usual affairs. Clouds begin to interrupt the clearness of the sky. They deepen and darken. The uncontrollable, elemental storm of the tropics, after years of durance, has burst its prisoning fetters. The people are awed by the terrific intensity of the outburst, but comfort their hearts with the idea that it will pass on as it has hitherto done. They knew not that the sceptre had slipped from the hands of the former rulers, who, within the chambers of the Three, Five and Seven, in the great tower of the temple, now lie prone upon their faces, heroically awaiting the unrolling of the book of just judgment. The cyclone becomes a continuous storm of day after day. The rocking earth vibrates beneath their feet, and trembles with each new blast of the mighty forces of nature, wind-enveloped, drawn here by human will, and now uncontrolled. The waters of the sea invade the land. Lashed on by the fierce currents upon their surface, the tides seem to be mounting higher and higher. It is now known that it was the sinking of the land, and not the rising of the waters, which for ages has hidden from investigation the abodes of the richest and most powerful nation ever dwelling

upon the earth. Foot by foot all that had ever been given to us by the waters was again demanded, and returned to its origin. The records of thousands of years were buried beneath the storm-tossed waters—buried but not destroyed. Only the mountain-tops and the highest plateaus, now known as islands, remained of all the vast continent. The inland lake mingled its waters with the incoming torrent from the salty ocean, and a great gulf waters the southern shore of the country, where now live in peace and wonder, over the hidden past, the same reincarnated mighty race. A few scattered books, written in stone, were saved, and a wall invisible and impermeable, was built around the indestructible manuscript. Unseen the Infinite Power thus preserves useful knowledge until the time and times for the revealing shall have come.

"'Fear and dread for ages and ages after the awful cataclysm, detained within the boundaries of their own country, the feeble remnant of a people once so invincible and venturesome. The rest of the world passed on and forgot them.'

"Here the speaker paused. His whole form seemed to dilate, then his musical intonation commenced again, but now more slowly and with a mournful cadence:

"'The story of the light-bearer who fell from heaven is our story. The legend of the great flood is the true narrative of facts of whose awfulness only we have experience. We have been forbidden to return to earth until the impetus of our knowledge should in some manner have spent itself, lest recurring memory tempt us to our own further pain. But thanks be to the Ruler of Men, I am again about to be permitted to pass out of this valley of shadows into the possibility of new experience, life and knowledge. None but he who has lived under the awful shadow can understand what it is to exist outside of the love-currents of the universe, enveloped in the separating displeasure of the Almighty. Such is the condition of those who seek selfish interest in preference to the good and pleasure of others.'

"As he said this he looked straight into my eyes and smiled, oh! so kindly, and then he said:

"'I shall enter the earth-life on the fifth day of October, at 2 o'clock in the morning.'

"When he said that, I felt as if his eyes went all through and through me—they just made me shiver—and then I woke up to find it was a dream.

"But," and her dark eyes sparkled, "it did

seem as real as you sitting there. What do you suppose he meant, Thomas, by coming into earth-life on the fifth day of October—that is almost a month yet? Do you suppose there is anything in it that means us?"

Thomas laughed quietly at her eagerness. "I don't know, lass; but if we may believe the wise ones, bigger things than that have happened to as humble folks as we. There's naught to do but wait. I have heard tell all things come to the waiter, and a good many things can happen in a month."

CHAPTER IV.

IT was plain to Thomas from the glimpses he had had of the invisible, that some event a little out of the ordinary was to honor him and his house. Angels have not stopped coming unawares to men, nor has man been left unbefriended and alone by those who can and do help him.

While thus sure of something, it was only by the indefinite knowledge, and not by anything he had been taught—in fact, the burden of all teaching, and of his associates, had borne heavily against the facts which he knew as a certainty—knew as he was certain he was alive. This constant opposition had arrested speech on these matters. He had no mind to be made the object of laughing ridicule by those without either knowledge or sense on such lines of unfoldment; neither did he wish to be antagonized or argued with, so he said nothing; only to Jane, whom he knew was in full sympathy with him. Such books as they could afford were well-read aloud, and a weekly Chicago secular paper and an agricultural monthly were studied by both.

One point had been fixed in the mind of each, and that was that one hundred and sixty acres properly and fully improved, would support a family of eight in comfort and comparative luxury, if need be. To do this, however, fence-rows of weeds must cease to have standing-ground. Thomas was often really pained at the wasteful methods of the farmers about him.

It seemed to him that if an acre produced ten bushels of wheat, and by close cultivation could be made by a very little more labor to produce twenty, that it was better to concentrate effort on smaller space than to increase labor and fatigue by diffusion over half-cared-for space, and wear one's self out by stepping around, instead of arm-exercise in slaying weeds and stirring the surface. There is no slavery equal to land-bondage.

This being a declaration of freedom, they lived up to it to the fullest extent. Their surplus which began to accumulate, they did not put into more acres, thus creating a millstone for their necks, but used it first for home improvements. An artesian well came first, bringing the water from far below the blue clay, and rising twenty-five feet above the surface, poured into the great cistern, which gave

head to the piping of the house and the bath-room of the main part already planned.

The roomy barn, the ample woodshed and the well-lighted cellar under the house all came in due time. They were planned fully at the first, then as money came from the perennial supply, the earth; whatever was done was paid for, and fitted in like a piece of mosaic, with all that had been done before—it was simply a carrying out of the original plan.

They had this idea, perhaps it was an erroneous one, that this one hundred and sixty acres was their invested capital, and the per cent. of interest obtainable therefrom was due to the labor of hand and brain, and the more brain the better. They made no debts, but as everything was paid for, they laid up no stock of worry and heartache.

Over and over again they were urged to buy this forty or that eighty on time, it was such a bargain and they were often called careless of their own interests, or worse, because they claimed to know enough to manage their own affairs. But those who meddled most have lived to see the wisdom of their course, which has brought them peace and harmony.

But these things did not happen all at once, nor rapidly, but in the natural outcome of the

steady working of two lives, the founders of a family to whom, newly come from the silent land, they offered a home, and by inference a share in the toil and profits accruing from the foundation and growth of that home.

Is it not too often the case that the parents assume for themselves the right to direct and judge—aye, to force the children into the most distasteful and uncongenial conditions, assuming thereby that they—the parents—have created for their single use and behoof both the bodies and souls of their children? The family, under this impious assumption, unconciously becomes a remorseless despotism instead of the co-operative republic it ought to be. The interests of all the members are identical, and can in no sense be at variance. The judgment of the younger members is proportioned to their experience and the accumulation of past lives.

The fall months of 1855 were unusually pleasant and favorable for farm work. Jane had a strong woman for a helper, and as there had been an addition built upon one side of the original cottage, containing two rooms, one for the family and the other for the children's bedroom, there was ample accommodation for the present. The larger room was carpeted

with rag-carpet, whose material had been prepared by Jane's busy fingers at intervals, and even Thomas and the hired man had helped in the rainy days, for, strange to say, he had time enough to attend to everything except the hours of rainy-day loafing at the corner grocery, where so many of his neighbors swapped smutty stories and laughed at indecent jokes; for neither these nor the liquor which invariably accompanied them had he any taste. As we are talking about a human man, and an Englishman, we cannot deny that he smoked.

But we were describing the cosy room, with its carpeted floor and white muslin curtained windows. The sills are old-fashioned and deep, so that a pet geranium or two and a heliotrope can find comfortable quarters where the southern sun peeps saucily in during the winter months.

On the walls a few harmoniously colored chromos and a steel plate head of Washington relieved the otherwise bareness of the room. There were three windows, and a knot of cherry-colored ribbon held back the white curtains. On the day which we are describing, there had been a cot placed in this room, and duly made up, as Jane said to her help:

"To be all ready, you know. Things hap-

pen sudden sometimes," and then she laughed a blushing little laugh.

For months and months Jane had been as happy as a bird could be; while she had worked hard, yet not to the overtaxing of herself, it was as if part of the harmony of a strain of music in which discord had no effect. It was as if all influences were combining to prepare the way of the coming and make the paths straight.

From sunny September days was brewed a heavy frost, and as the year turned into the October house, clouds hung low and the weather became very treacherous. On the 4th of October a storm set in, and as the day grew old, coming events that cast their shadows before, had sent Thomas for the midwife and nurse. The evening waned and lost itself in the night. In the kitchen Thomas sat nervously waiting the end that should also be a beginning, in which of all that had occurred in their married life thus far he could be of no help.

He could not shake off a feeling of awesomeness, as if the coming happening was, in this case, of more than usual importance. The old clock in the corner struck one, and drowsiness suddenly weighed down upon his

eyelids, as if a heavy hand lay there. A voice, close to his ear, said:

"Look up, and for thyself see a few of the future years."

Apparently opening his eyes, he beheld a fair girl amidst the familiar, yet unfamiliar, surroundings of this home, a comfort and a joy to all, and yet, as he seemed to know, the soul was old beyond compare, full of a power that was ever and anon overflowing its bounds, as the bubbling waters of the fountain, inspired by the invisible ether within, overleap the restraining edges.

The voice resumed:

"Thou seest the coming soul. In ages long past thou didst love and reverence thy more than peer. The weakness of the instrument used does not absolve thee from thy obligations of the past, present or the future. As thou hast hitherto striven to be, be now a man in all that is therein implied."

Here Thomas surprised himself in the act of apparently waking up. The clock struck two. The cry of the newly-born sounded from the other room, while a fierce gust of wind from the howling storm outside shook the house to its foundations. Hardly awake,

he heard a voice that sounded like his, but was it his? It said:

"October fifth, two o'clock in the morning!"

What was it that had come to him amidst the screeching of the tempest and the fierce shock of contending vibrations. Was the curious vision of his wife a reality? Did the long ago dead re-embody? Who knew, and who could tell? Was it probable or possible for souls out of the body for ages, who had sinned and suffered, to once more claim heritage upon the earth? Could the ancient races lay hold upon the modern peoples for the purposes of their own fulfillment, and why not? There, to this plain, honest, common sense inquirer after the truth, the matter for the present stopped.

Why not?

Nothing is impossible to the One. Seeming impossibility is the result of our ignorance of law. We hardly know the laws that govern our own bodies. It is not strange that we fail to understand the far-reaching and interweaving of resultant force throughout the universe, much of it beyond even our spirit touch, for the very reason that we cannot understand.

Shortly the nurse announced that a vigorous, healthy girl-baby was his. A girl! This was a surprise. How, then, could it be that the revelation could be correct? There must be a cog out somewhere, for a boy could not be a girl. Surely things are getting strangely mixed. The thing that was planned has failed. In coming to this conclusion he forgot that sex belongs to the physical body, and has naught to do with the soul. The body is the tool or instrument of the soul, and the work done must differ with the character of the tool. One would not undertake to split rails with a razor, nor shave with an axe, and yet both are made of steel, and the difference would correspond with sex difference. Verily, in heaven they are neither married nor given in marriage, for sex is left with the body, to which it belongs.

When the morning dawned in clearing brightness, the new father was admitted to the bedside of his wife, still weary with the greatest mystery of the world. In an undertone she said:

"But, Thomas, he has come; I know it; only I don't see why it is a girl. How can a man be anything but a boy when he is born again? See her." So saying she uncovered the mor-

sel of humanity by her side. At that moment the great blue eyes opened, with an odd, old look, startling in its penetration and comprehension of its surroundings.

"That's an awful look," said the startled father. "She'll be a witch, sure. She looks as if she knew more now than the grown-ups."

From that hour the father always stood a little in awe of this visitor in his household, whose coming had been so definitely presaged, and the actual advent seemed to be attended with natural disturbances. But nothing had had so much effect on him as that first look, to which some brotherhood tie of his own soul had at once replied, establishing for all time to come his warmest and tenderest affection for this his first-born.

CHAPTER V.

THE vigorous body given into the keeping of a living soul grew and strengthened from day to day. It really seemed sickness-proof. It eat and slept; the ordinary set-backs of childhood had no effect upon it. It could hardly have been said to have had a sick day up to the time when this chapter opens. It was her seventh birthday.

She was always kindly considerate of her companions, and helpful beyond the expectation of her age. But there was about her large eyes an intent expression, as if constantly listening, a wierd impression, and her quaint speech was a constant surprise to her mother, to whom she had become very dear, and to whom, in the soul's self, had come a feeling of more than parental love comparable to nothing but old comradeship of sacrifice and adherence, until life itself had faded out into the Unseen.

It was hardly to be expected that the child would be in the company of the father as much as in that of the mother, but many hours were spent together. Never was Elsie better

pleased than when she could go into the field with her father, and "help fix it," whatever was the allotment of the day.

It was no wonder, then, that she was strong and full of life, and a good deal of a romp. Every live thing on the place seemed to know and respect her, from the big dog Turk, who had been a present as a puppy, for the baby, to the home-bred horse, who chafed under every hand but hers.

As a birthday privilege she had begged her father's permission to go over to the wood-lot with him to bring up a load of wood for winter's use. Bright and happy nearly always, and yet with an indefinable something resting upon her fair face, as the dawn imprints itself upon the hem of night's sable robe, a mystic change constantly evolved. Upon that tablet there seemed always a perception of the light which is not on land nor sea, and yet is over all, and controls all, in its potent energy.

She sat by her father's side on the spring-seat, and, instead of bubbling over with her usual winsome chatter, a great stillness settled upon her. This her father perceived, and finally said:

"What ails thee, Elsie? What makes thee so still?"

"I don't know, papa. It seems as if I was two great big people. I think it's 'cause I have a birthday. Do you think people feel different on different birthdays? I don't remember that I felt so when I was six years old. But," she added, "I don't think I remember very well. Then there's another thing, papa —didn't I used to live somewhere else than here? Have I always lived here with you and mamma ever since I was borned? Tell me true, papa Thomas."

"You were born here, and have never been out of the neighborhood," was the father's reply, a perplexed look stealing into his own face.

"Then why is it, papa, I seem to remember about great, big palaces and temples, such as mamma reads about out of that history, and so many splendid people, who had the most beautifulest dresses and things on, and I seem to be one of them myself. Then I have horrid dreams sometimes. Seems as if I'd been real wicked, and I was going to be drowned, just like our poor little kittens. What makes me, papa, say?"

The father could only reply:

"Why, Elsie, I can't tell." Then there came vividly to his mind his wife's vision, so

many years since. Had that any connection with these thoughts of his little one? Was it true that the first rounding out of the number seven brought about the beginning of a new unfolding, and this the beginning of the manner of it?

A little feeling of jealousy came over him, as if the love and affection of the child, which had been so much to him, was about to become less.

As if in reply to the thought, Elsie looked up soberly, and said: "But, papa, I don't care how many ones I be, and the dreams won't make me proud. I shall always love my papa, just as long as he is good, and ever so much longer, too, I guess."

So she dropped the subject, and the merry self reasserted itself again. But the lesson to the father was of much import, and did not drift out of his memory for days as he wondered what it all portended.

Arriving at the lot, the child was put upon the ground to wander at her own sweet will, for she was no stranger to "the woods," and to gather such treasures of late fall flowers and leaf and nut as are always dear to the childish heart. Meanwhile the father occupied himself in making up the load he intended to carry back to the home.

An hour had elapsed, when suddenly a laughing exclamation of Elsie's rang clearly out on the crisp air. Then, "Oh, papa! see what the gentleman has given me," and the next instant she came running up to him, holding something that glistened in the sunshine.

Mr. Holmes, taking it in his hand, perceived the glitter of gold and gem, and said: "Where did you get this, Elsie?"

"That gentleman gave—but where did he go to? He was right there just a moment ago!" and perfectly bewildered she stopped, with her great blue eyes wide open and lips parted. It was perfectly plain that whatever it might seem to others, it was a reality to her.

"There is no gentleman," said the father.

"He was there," persisted the child. "He had a long white dress on, and a white sunbonnet, and he looked so kind I wasn't a bit afraid of him. He had a gold chain about his neck, and this was hanging on it. He took it off and gave it to me. He said: 'I return thee this, which for years I have held in trust.' What does 'in trust' mean, papa?" and fairly out of breath the little one stopped.

The father, still in a sort of daze, replied: "Why, Elsie, it means it was yours, and he was keeping it safe for you, I suppose; but then,

how——" and he stopped, for it was getting to be more and more of a puzzle to him.

As he stopped speaking, a voice close by, grave in accent, but clear and bell-like in its intonation, said: "It is thine to wear in remembrance of the day. Bind it about thy neck forever." The father and the child both heard these words, and saw a grave, tall personage, in an ashy gray robe, who smiled kindly upon them, and faded out into thin air.

"I didn't see him go anywhere; where is he?" was Elsie's exclamation.

"I guess you will see him again sometime," said the father, not at all alarmed by a phenomenon by no means strange to him.

The father produced from his pocket a stout piece of twine. "The man said thou't to wear it, lass. He did not seem of the ne'er-do-weels, so we'll put it on a string until thy mother can get a gold chain for thee from the city." So saying, he tied firmly on her neck the locket, which held in a heavy frame of old gold a circular plate of sea-green beryl; on this was engraved a mystic symbol of brotherhood often seen in the carvings of the ancient Egyptians in both temple and tomb.

This ready obedience of the father to the

injunction of the unknown messenger was of far more importance to him than could have seemed possible, as we shall see later on. We are very often liable to blame our spirit friends for the disastrous effects of our own tardy obedience to their requests made with a desire to help us.

Seemingly quite impressed, Elsie found a seat between two tree-trunks growing closely together and was silent while her father finished the loading.

At last everything being in readiness, he made a seat for himself and the girl, and, calling her, helped her up, then mounting himself he turned his horses homeward. Hardly had they started when Elsie said:

"Why, papa, this locket talks. I hear words that seem to come from it."

"What does it say, lass?" asked the father.

"Don't cross the river on the upper bridge, or you'll be sorry."

"Are you sure that is what it says?"

"Yes; it said it over and over two or three times."

This advice, if followed, would make necessary a detour of at least two miles, and the road was not quite so good; but not being a doubting Thomas, and having lived so many

years in full consciousness of the reality of the invisible and their intended benefactors to man, he turned off on the road that led to the lower bridge. "It's but a little thing," he said, "and how can we get good or help from the invisible if we don't act on their advice?" As he thought this, he happened to glance at the locket, which hung in full sight on Elsie's neck. It seemed as if a ray of sunshine rested on it, made more prominent because the sun was held in a cloud.

During the evening a neighbor called, and told him the upper bridge had broken down while a load of wood was going over it. The wagon was broken, the horses lamed and the owner, though badly scratched, had not been fatally injured.

"I knew you generally went that way," he said, "so I thought I would come around and tell you."

"Yes," replied Mr. Holmes, "but I did not come that way to-day.

"Mighty lucky for you, you didn't, neighbor," was the response.

As the man of whom they were talking was well-to-do, nothing more was said of it.

Neither then nor at any other time did they or Elsie mention her gift to their neighbors;

nor did she ever in her girlish years, offer to show it to her playmates.

When they were alone that night the father and mother talked long and anxiously over Elsie's birthday gift, and the circumstances of its coming. The mother, while having no doubt of the account, had but one solicitude in regard to it, and that was, would the talisman, for such it seemed to be, bring good to Elsie?

"Wife, I think it must," said Thomas; "anyhow it is her's and she must wear it, that's plain."

So it happened that the very next time the good mother went to Chicago, she brought back a strong gold chain and clasp. In this case price was not counted nor considered. In those days gold was gold, for men's passions and wrong doing had precipitated a crisis, and the War of the Rebellion was on.

From this eventful day, Elsie, while not in any sense moping, seemed to have grown wonderfully discreet. It was like the blossom of the rose, which reaches a certain point slowly and in sequence, and then suddenly all at once bursts into full bloom, the air is deluged with its fragrance, and the eye dazzled with its harmonies of color. So with Elsie; it seemed as if the minute-hand of her life had been moved

forward several points. It was not the transitory change of a cloud passing over the sun, but permanent and natural, in some ways strange, however, because of the unexpectedness of it.

CHAPTER VI.

UP to this winter Elsie had not been to school. Her mother had taught her to read, and of her own accord she had picked up an old mental arithmetic, and spent much time in working upon the simple operations of mathematics, questioning her mother closely at the first, but soon pushing her reasoning far out into the intricacies of operation, and showing herself very bright on points, as occasion offered, where she had had no instruction. But this winter she teased to go to school.

A new district had been formed, and the new school-house had been built about a mile from the Holmes' farm. The teacher they had hired was an elderly man, who had patience enough to be kind to the children. From his memory had faded, if it ever dwelt there, the ancient antithesis, "lickin' and larnin'." His soul had looked out along the paths of altruism, and in the view of shortening life, greed had shriveled up in its effect on his daily life. It was a fortunate thing for Elsie. Was it a happen so, or was the " wind tempered to

the shorn lamb?" How are we to take and account for so many things of the inscrutable constantly coming to our notice and into our lives?

It was Monday after Thanksgiving, the school opened. There were thousands of hearts of wives and mothers throughout the country to whom it seemed hard to find crumbs enough of comfort to be thankful for.

In the main, Elsie's school-days passed much as other children's, but occasionally some incident would indicate that the outer life was not the life within.

Several times she came home and told of strangers who had come into the school-room, and, after respectfully addressing the teacher, moved about the room, and then she did not see them go out.

"And, mamma," she would say, "they did not pay any attention to them. Teacher did not notice them no more than if they hadn't been there."

To these remarks the wise mother made but little reply, for she knew, who better than she, that her daughter dwelt constantly on the borderland of two worlds, of which impressions were received from one as strongly as from the other.

There was one advanced pupil in the school, a lad of sixteen, who was pushing his studies in higher mathematics, hoping to become an engineer some day. His text-book was on conic sections, and in his usually clear demonstrations, Elsie always seemed much interested. One day, however, he failed to obtain the correct result, and the teacher, coming to his assistance, was also baffled. While studying the intricacies of the work, the teacher, glancing casually over the room, as teachers are prone to do, saw Elsie's hand raised.

"Well, Elsie, what is it?"

"Please, sir, you have a wrong place in your statement."

The teacher, half amused and half surprised, and, still, having perceived too much in this child to check anything of this kind that she might do within bounds, said, with just a little doubt in his voice:

"Come up here, then; perhaps you can work the problem."

Without another word Elsie left her seat; a peculiar, set look, familiar to those who have made occult things a study, rested on her young face; her large eyes were dilated to the fullest extent; at the same time she did not seem to be at all receptive of her surround-

ings, nor of the wonder of the children and the amused look of the teacher and his waiting pupil.

Still without a word Elsie took the crayon from the teacher's hand, and, turning to the blackboard, in a large, firm, masculine hand, commenced with cos. a x sine a ÷ cos. b = x, and without a pause or any sign of hesitation whatever, wrote out a demonstration covering half the blackboard, and concluding with the correct result. The demonstration was clear and indisputable.

The surprised teacher said, simply: "Thank you, Elsie."

The child turned back to her seat, and the quick eye of the teacher alone noted the clearing of her face to its usual expression, and then the head went down on the folded arms upon the desk in front, and for half an hour she slept undisturbed.

It is to be inferred that the wise old soul within did not often thus test the strength and power of his instrument, but one more incident happening this winter should be related here:

One day after school was dismissed, one of the boys of the ruder sort had picked up a forlorn kitten, which he was abusing with the

usual boyish heedlessness. He had seated himself upon a stone by the side of the road the better to accomplish his purpose, and was giving full reign to the brute within, which is the common heritage of mankind, whether civilized or uncivilized.

Few things ever so distressed Elsie as cruelty to animals, and the more defenseless they were, so much the more was she up in arms for their protection. So now she indignantly asked the young scamp to stop his torture.

"It's my cat, and it ain't none of your business, anyhow," was the tart rejoinder.

Before he could make any resistance Elsie had seized the kitten, and holding it in her arms, at the same time turning upon him a face that fairly shone, she earnestly said:

"It is mean in you to be so cruel. I hope you will have to sit there until you are better!"

Saying that she walked quickly away. The boy stared after her until she disappeared around a turn in the road, carrying the kitten nestled in her arms.

After a little he tried to get up, but a hand on his shoulder seemed to hold him down. A burst of tears relieved his first alarm, and, after some meditation, a genuine regret filled his thoughts.

"I guess I was mean, and I'll never do so any more, s'help me," was the ejaculation just above his breath.

No sooner had he uttered these words than he felt free to move, and hurried home. There was something more in this than the mere telling as it appeared on the surface, for quite a change was wrought in the boy, who, from a person inclined to tease the defenceless, became the defender, and always thereafter was one of Elsie's strongest champions.

It was plain to all who witnessed or knew of any of these displays of abnormal power that it was not Elsie the child, but something that was and was not her. When questioned about how she did those "strange things," her reply invarably was:

"I don't do them; they do themselves."

CHAPTER VII.

AS the years went by, and her mental perception increased, she became more and more reserved, repressing within herself any exhibition of the powers which seemed constantly to grow stronger. She had no desire to draw upon herself the criticism of witlings, nor to become a center for public notoriety. It was enough for her that she knew something of her own strength, and that those nearest to her—her father and mother—both understood and sympathized with her.

In the fall of 1863 she advised her father to invest his spare cash in some land on the South Side of Chicago, which a business friend was very anxious at the time to get rid of. It was a bargain. In August, 1871, the father came home from the city one day, and said:

"Elsie, lass, I had an offer for that piece of property of ours in the city. Sam Briggs offers me $18,000 for it; I think he'll give $20,000, but it has doubled itself every two years, and it seems to me it will sell for more. What dost think?"

"If he will give $20,000 for it, take it," was Elsie's swift reply. "It will be worth much less before it is worth more."

So strongly was the father convinced of the unseen guidance that he obeyed implicitly now, in all cases where the instruction was definite, so the next day the bargain was completed. A few days later, the $20,000 in government bonds was in the safe, built into a vault constructed under the old house. At that time bonds were the nearest approach to cash, gold and silver it was possible to reach.

It was on the 5th of October, 1871, that Elsie's sixteenth birthday came. The old house had been so enlarged and added to, that it could hardly have been remembered, even for itself, of sixteen years before. The theory had been worked into practice; the whole one hundred and sixty acres had been transformed into a garden in its fertility, and its profits were often tenfold those of the neighboring sections, in which all labor and material were spread over four times as much space. Concentration tells, whether of thought or hand-work.

But in the best room, after tea, there were Elsie, her father and mother, and four girl friends, who, of all their neighbors, were

neither afraid nor ashamed to declare their belief that man dies not, and that he can communicate with the living, if the living will only hear.

There had been a little birthday supper, and now they were sitting quietly talking in restful tones, whose peace brought harmony to all the vibrations, and waiting for what might be given to them through Elsie.

Sitting in a high-backed chair, her head resting easily against the crimson plush, and her eyes closed, she was very fair to look upon, and although her dress was not costly beyond her station, yet all the colors, the fitting and the finishing, and the softness and the fineness of the textures themselves, were studies for an artist.

Sitting thus, her friends perceived a change steal over her face, a change familiar to those who have taken any steps to become acquainted with the dwellers of the Summerland. Then, with features fixed and rigid, she commenced speaking in a quick, terror-stricken way:

"I see a great city at night, and a fire breaks out. It is a small fire at the first, and the firemen seem to put it out. But no! they don't put it quite out, for it breaks out again. I think it is Chicago, on the West side and the

North side and the South side are all on fire. Only the North and South sides are badly burnt. The West is injured but a little. The wind blows from the southwest. All the stores are burnt up and the fire comes north until there is no more for it to burn, and then it stops. The air is on fire; it is like a great furnace. People have no time to save their furniture, hardly their lives. I see them flying everywhere. Oh, it is horrible! There has never been such a disaster since the world stood. I see now great heaps of blackened ruins, piles of bricks and stones and ashes. I see also the manifestations of the world's pity in instant relief; then as the pictures fade into one another in a dissolving view, I behold a new, fairer city, stately and grand, that will, before the century ends, bring all the world to look upon her strength and beauty, for the 'Strong Men of the West' will surely rebuild most magnificently their favorite city."

Words fail to describe the effect of this revelation upon this little group of hearers. But Elsie's father in a low voice, asked:

"Is this near at hand?"

"The beginning is almost here. The time is numbered by days," was the answer.

This warning, so soon to be verified, was

but idle wind in its effect on doubting men, who, from Noah until now, have ever replied to the prediction of calamity by the Unseen with a careless laugh and an imperious assumption of self-protection.

No man of forty years of age is now living who does not remember the awful news of that October day in 1871, out of whose terror and devastating desolation has been reincarnated for us the new Chicago, now making itself ready to entertain the world at its Fete.

Elsie stopped speaking, and was soon her natural self again. The vision having come through trance, was known to her only as her hearers told her. She having been unconscious, could offer no explanation nor additional information.

CHAPTER VIII.

BEFORE going farther with our heroine, simply premising that her father and mother, seeking the possible for her, concluded to send her to a school in one of the Eastern States, and while she is getting ready to go, we will go on ahead, and see for ourselves the annoyances that await her.

On a lonely road, just beyond a still lonelier forest, stands a large, square house, evidently once the residence of a wealthy owner. The heavy blinds are shut, but the grounds and the house itself are well-kept in spite of the loneliness. A faithful man and his wife are in charge, who know it is for their interests to be careful and not to talk to any chance visitor. They have keys to the lower part of the building, but to the upper story no one has ever been admitted save the master and some friends, who come here once in three months for a couple of days, always at the time of the full moon. They have done this for almost thirty-five years. In this time the master has seemed to age much faster than the years simply would warrant. Some secret anxiety has disquieted him. So thinks the aged serv-

itor, and says nothing, which is most discreet in him.

To-night is one of their regular meetings. Driving up from the nearest railroad station, seven old men come to the house, and being admitted to the lower part of the building, are waited upon by the serving man and his wife, as they have done many times before. The rooms below are comfortable, and embrace a sitting-room, a dining-room and kitchen, with seven bedrooms. Small need, however, of these latter for guests whose best work must be done when others sleep.

The upper part of the house has, in its center, two rooms of nearly equal size, separated by a portiere of embroidered silk, heavy with gold thread. Between the walls of the house and the inner rooms is a passageway of about five feet wide, completely surrounding them. There is but one door opening out of this passage into the inner rooms; the partition wall was thick, of brick, and unpierced by any opening save the door, yet means had been found for ventilation. More than that, precautions had been taken on the inside to brick up under the blinds all of the windows, so that whatever secret these rooms held, was likely to be so held until the end of time.

When they have finished their supper and are ready, the master takes a key from his pocket, and, opening by a concealed panel in the wall the lock of a door, he applies his key; the heavy door swings wide open. The Seven slowly ascend the stairs to the upper story, where they find themselves in the hallway already mentioned, a few steps from the door leading into the inner rooms.

At the Master's touch the door slides noiselessly open, and they all enter. The room is plainly furnished—there is a round table in the center, and comfortable arm-chairs, finished in cane on a dark frame, stand around it. Here they take their seats in some sort of prearranged order. There is but a word or two, and those in the quietest and most even tones. Nothing but a perfect harmony between each member could have brought about a helpful condition for the exercise of potency, no matter for what purpose.

The round table is of ebony, inlaid with rich woods in some mystic design, and divided into seven segments. Over the center, at some five feet above the table hangs a crystal globe, from whose interior glows a luminous center. This brilliancy, modified by the medium through which it shone, sheds a steady radiance

on all these men of unmistakable purpose and inscrutable, strange knowledge.

As we look at them, they every one show that their plans once formed are rarely diverged from, but pushed to the end regardless of any personal suffering or pain. They are gray-haired, and their long beards are white. For years they have trod the mystic path. Three are doctors in most successful practice. One is a divine, known throughout the world for his persuasive pulpit oratory. Two are professors in institutions of learning, whose signatures upon the books they now and then give to the world, stamp the work in the scientific and literary world as authority. The seventh is a magnate in the business world, whose associates and the world at large deem gifted with the cap of Fortunatus. His career has been most marvelous. How little does the careless, happy-go-lucky world of ours know of the inner mystery, the carefully concealed life of those whose successful effects only are permitted to the gaze of all beholders. To whomsoever dares enter the chamber of initiation is permitted according to his courage, and that only.

It has been demonstrated beyond a doubt that to such men, when keepers of the holy

places, a great deal of the mystic thought of the present day is due, by which everybody is impelled in a greater or less degree, to seek to know something of the Unseen and Intangible, which is the only real.

Before going on with our story we must make one or more explanations—that is, while these men were apparently absorbed in the calls of the outer life, they never for one moment let go of the thread of the inner, and by their united purpose in investigation demonstrated beyond doubt several questions of bewildering perplexity to the average mind. On this present meeting they were to receive an answer to a problem they had waited years to solve, but we will let the story explain itself.

The tones of the speakers had grown lower and lower, and their words farther and farther apart, until the chime of a clock, solemn as the note of a cathedral bell, hanging on the wall opposite the Master's place, proclaimed the quarter-hour. His quiet voice then said:

"Let the brothers now clothe themselves in the apparel of the order."

At this, each member of the circle approached the wall of the room, and from secret cabinets drew long, white robes with flowing sleeves, a girdle for the waist, and a light, square mus-

lin headdress, also with flowing side-pieces.

As each donned his insignia he returned to his place quietly, and with as little stir as the soft murmur of the summer zephyr among the leaves of the grove.

On the girdle of each was a symbol wrought into a crystal sphere hanging pendant, but on the headdress of him who was chief, there was a seven-pointed star, in which the play of colors was as varying and vivid as the corruscation of a diamond.

A few moments more of silence, in which the ticking of the clock was like the blows of a trip-hammer, and then the Elder Brother spoke. "The day for which we have in patience contented our souls is here. May the Wisdom of the Ages guide us and protect us, and make us potent." Turning to his left-hand he made a challenge; this was answered and repeated until it returned whence it came. This in tri-form, thrice repeated, was followed by a sign of manifestation. Then all rising, clasped hands, and professed unity. Then, with the hands clasped, as in the old Egyptian rite, they covered themselves with the invocation and adjuration of the unspeakable.

This opening was followed by the usual routine of record-keeping, and the reports of

the outcome of experiments going on all over the world—in India, in Central America, in the mountains of Afghanistan, in Egypt and Abyssinia.

But now the clock chimed the beginning of the last quarter before low twelve. The Elder Brother made the sign of attention; at once every eye was fixed upon him. As one man they stood up, and stepped to the right of the seats they occupied; then, with like precision as one, they followed him, leading the way to the heavy curtains of the archway between the two rooms. As they approach, the curtains, seemingly of their own accord, parted at the center and slowly opened. At the commencement of the movement we are describing, a low hum had become audible, increasing rapidly in energy and loudness, and as the curtains were swept aside it became a long-drawn note on a minor key, sobbing and throbbing with the sorrows of the race. It was the appeal of projected potency to the powers of the human soul, on the lines of constraint most resistless.

At the same time throughout both the rooms there floated a penetrating perfume, exhilarating almost to intoxication, and under whose effect the limiting walls of human environment seemed to fade away. Added to this, was

an apparently increased power, a peculiar, penetrating quality of the light, a proof that all the different phenomena were referable to one cause, and that was the raising of the vibrations of manifestation by the outflowing force of a mighty will then and there present.

All this, taking so long to describe happened all at once, another evidence that they were but effects of the same cause, and that cause the concentration of the human will to move and control where it is man's right, or he has seized upon the ability at his own hazard, to dominate and direct. Man is, and may always be, lord and master and not the slave of circumstances.

As the curtains of the portiere slipped back they revealed a room of the same size as the one occupied for the meeting—square and spacious, and finished on the sides and ceiling in some kind of glazed pottery of a bluish tint. In this were inlaid in red and black mosaic, symbols of the ancient Cabalists, which, to him who knew, held clustered about them by the power of the thought of the most learned and powerful of the wise men of all the past ages most awful potency, both to protect and to seize. The whole was finished in the most perfect manner possible,

and shimmered like a polished mirror. The lustre of reflection was soft and powerful wherever it fell upon the living. From the ceiling a globe of crystal maintained its equipoise without visible means of support. It was evidently a source of light, but it did not yield it in the same way as an ordinary lamp, for no glare prevented its being distinctly seen in the universally diffused light coming from nowhere in particular.

On one side of the room was a circle about five feet in diameter, inclosed by a triple circumference of red, white and black. The outer circle was black, and the inner red. The form and color symbolized their belief that darkness and silence held all, and that fire was the creative energy; to this was due also the color of the arterial blood or life of the body. The interior of this circle, in its whole area, resembled the ground glass of a photographic camera. Over its surface formless shadows were moving in a measured rhythm, corresponding to the pulsations of sound, color and fragrance, now manifesting themselves so intensely to the personal sense. Upon this septum are reflected the secret records of the "Hall of Learning." Whoso has the key can read herein the things of

the past and the future, for are not these part of the astral records—that divine memory which remembers all things, both the evil and the good, every jot or title for Karmic expiation in the ages to come? But let him who attempts exploration of this field take heed to himself, lest the evil deceive him by appearing to be good, for of such is its nature.

On the opposite side of the room, running the whole length, was a highly-polished mahogany table, inlaid with silver. On this rested a most intricate arrangement of wires, wheels and electric multipliers. These were all evidently connected with a glass case containing a magnificent galvanic battery. Over the center of this curious mechanism, against the wall, was a large dial like a clock-face. A very grotesquely carved frame of ebony surrounded the dial, the whole representing the Egyptian symbol of Eternity—a serpent with its tail in its mouth. There were five hands, each ending in a serpent's head, with brilliants for eyes. The usual circle for the hours and minutes was in the center. Outside of this were the months and days, and on an outer circle still were numbered years from one to twenty-five. At a moment which we are now describing, the hands indicated

five minutes before twelve o'clock of the last day of the twelfth month of the twenty-fifth year. There was not the smallest part of this superb mechanism but what was of the most perfect finish and highest polish.

But in the center of the room, on a raised dais, at an angle of forty-five degrees, so as to be in full view, was placed a casket of glass. Within its crystal walls reclined a maiden of wonderful beauty. Her hair of that rippling, lustrous gold about which poets and artists rave, flowed about her neck and shoulders, a great, ambient flood of color, reflecting back the soft, brilliant light of the room from its glossy waves. A robe of foamy tissue covered her, save where the bare arms and shoulders, rounded and full, showed their exquisite and statuesque proportions. She lay with closed eyes as in slumber.

The seven advancing slowly and decorously arranged themselves evidently in stated places, each standing upon a different inlaid symbol upon the floor. Once again they joined hands in that mystic interclasp of unity. On the instant the music increased in its intensity; it became a spoken spell, a voiced invocation, and all the correspondencies were advanced in the same ratio. If

souls can be called back from whence they go, they certainly could not resist this appeal.

And now a strange thing happened. Dim, shadowy forms floated through the room, indistinctly perceived. Then came the shuddering thrill by which all physical being involuntarily testifies its allegiance to the unseen, and spiritual, passing through each person present.

Then he who was Master spoke, and as he did so the seven-pointed star on his forehead flashed and flamed as if moved by an inner intelligence belonging to itself alone. These were his words:

"Brothers of the eternal and mystic number, we meet at last for the final verification of the great, central idea. We shall soon know whether the soul dominates the body through the infinite ages. The hand on the dial approaches the full time when the twenty-five years shall be completed since, in this room, my beloved daughter, of her own free will, passed from anesthesia to suspended animation. During this quarter of a century the body has been preserved intact from the power of Zeb Chronos, the Destroyer. It is untouched by the mouldering decay which happens to gross mortality. Our skill and her

acquiescence preserves this physical form to us this day beautiful and perfect as at the moment when she so willingly offered herself as a volunteer explorer in this untried and dangerous advance into the domain of the Unknown Science. Thus far our experiment is a success. We are now to learn from the actual whether the spirit can re-enter the body at will. Are we ready?"

The sages bowed low as one man, and their voices as one voice, replied:

"In the name of the Three, the Five, the Seven, we are ready."

The hands on the dial of the great clock moved slightly. The twenty-five years was finished, and the lid of the casket flew open! The occupant moved, opened her eyes—blue as the sapphires of St. John's vision—and spoke. Her voice was not of mortal cadence, and seemed like an answering chord to the music which had now ceased. A silence followed, as profound and as far from all mortal things as light is from darkness. It was the silence which, louder than the seven thunders, speaks to the soul of unutterable things. Like the music of a dream her words fall on the inner sense, the true clairaudience, without the need of the auditory nerve.

"Father, dear, and my honored friends, I have come back, answering your invocation, to fulfill my obligation under our most solemn compact. I answer your unspoken question by word, as action has already replied. It is possible for those who have passed beyond the veil to come back to the earth-form, if it is kept unsoiled and perfect; but oh! my father, it is not desirable for the soul who has progressed so to do. The youth outgrows the swaddling bands of infancy. If this is true of the outer manifestation, how much more so is it of the spiritual grown apart of its garment of clay? Never, voluntarily, will the soul descend again into its old, out-grown prison-house.

"The new body of the perfect revealed to the wise ones under the symbol of the Resurrection, will be as spiritual and perfect as the soul, a growth from within outwardly, the reverse of the manifestation now known to your personal sense as physical growth. Farewell, dearly beloved, until you, released also from fetters of clay, shall meet me in the eternal and undying. I adjure you, by the dreadful 'word of power,' to let me go. With all the spirit force I have attained during these years of sojourn beyond the veil, I WILL this dust to dust."

As these words vibrated out in firm, clear tones, a cloud of fine ashes fell back into the casket, covering the whole surface of the bottom, and leaving a glorified shape that floated out into the room and was gone.

Upon the faces of the seven came a look of relief, as when one has grasped the solution of an intricate problem. Only upon the countenance of the Master appeared aught of cloud, as if in the cup of success there remained a single drop of the bitterness of the waters of Marah. She had been his daughter and companion in all his studies until the fatal day when, inspired by enthusiasm, with the self-devotion peculiar to her sex, she had offered herself as a subject for this dangerous, and, as it proved, fatal experiment.

CHAPTER IX.

A FEW days later this father sits, in a distant city, by himself, in an elegantly appointed suite of appartments in whose fittings, evidently regardless of cost, exquisite taste and luxurious desire had spared no detail, although located in a large hotel. As the building is his, these rooms were designed and fitted up with special reference to his own occupancy. They are on the upper floor, in an angle, which receives the smallest amount of the incident wave of sound always breaking against the blocks of a great city. Moreover the elevation is such that the roar and rattle intrude only in a faint, far-off murmur. Thus was the solitude of a desert-place secured, even in the tossing turmoil of a surging, crowded business mart, whose masses are utterly regardless of the things which most nearly concern their real welfare.

The hotel people thought it a little queer he should thus seclude himself, and prefer the solitude to the busy tidal flow of the lower floors; but that was his own concern, and they did not presume that the payment of rent en-

titled them to the privilege of asking any unnecessary or personal questions in regard to matters that were wholly private. It is true there is no place of concealment equaling a large city for its completeness. But the servants said he had not been quite right since his wife died and his daughter disappeared. The rooms, three in number—sitting-room, library and sleeping apartment—were, as we have already stated, tastefully and harmoniously fitted with a special regard for the unities and massing of colors and forms. They were scrupulously cared for by his own special servant, a son of Ham of most decided color, whose fidelity knew no doubt; but though on duty constantly in the daytime, no sum in gold paid down would have induced him to pass a night within their walls.

"Ole marse is good—never was better than he," he said; "but dis nigga no bisness with what he knows."

But cunningly concealed from questioning eyes and tongues, in the space occupied by the inner divisions and the outside walls, was a small room five feet by seven. The entrance to this no man knew, save the present owner and occupant. Here daily, save when the full-moon meetings were held, either the physical

or astral form of the Master was present.

As he sits now musing, thinking of things not lawful to utter, even in the lowest whisper, lest the ever-moving thought currents of the Universe transplant some prolific germ to a fertile mind, which, seizing hold upon suggested possibilities could, through selfish manipulation, make the world worse, the little clock on the mantel, with a sweet trill of bird-notes, announces the hour of twelve midnight. He rises, throws off his dressing-gown, and robes himself in a white linen stole, with flowing sleeves, reaching to the floor, puts upon his feet a pair of glass slippers, and a belt of some dark, flexible material is clasped about his waist. On one side of the room, painted upon a large tablet of ivory, is a full-length portrait of the lovely girl who has gone hence into the silent world. He approaches it, touches a spring, and the whole tablet opens into the room, disclosing the secret chamber already mentioned. At the instant of opening a brilliant light flashed out relieving a previous darkness. The floor is of glass, the walls are constructed of plates of metal in some order of sequence continued through the whole series. In the full light they shine with a polish undimmed by the action of the atmos-

phere. The roof was arched in an eliptical outline. In the exact center was an easy chair of glass, standing on a glass platform, raised from the floor-level by a single step, but the seat, back and arms of the chair were upholstered in white silk.

The Master stepped into the room, the panel-door, as if closed by invisible hands, swung softly to as he advanced to the chair and seated himself. Every step he made on the polished floor was attended with curious corruscations of phosphorescent light and resonant crackle, as if one were walking on a thin metallic surface which yielded to the pressure of the weight. When seated, directly before him fixed in the wall, was a circular metal mirror, three feet in diameter, made of an amalgam covered with glass, known to the wise, ages and ages ago. He fixes his eyes upon the mirror, and the powers of his mind draw at once toward himself, all that belongs to him, hitherto scattered through all the channels of Universal communication. Over the face of the mirror comes an intense blackness, which completely obscures it. It was as if the mirror had, for the time, been entirely removed from the wall. This slowly breaks away, unfolding from the center; then as the surface

become svisible once more, six forms are seen clearly mirrored upon its surface. At first indistinct, they finally come out clearly defined on this wonderful tressel-board. The faces are those of the "mystic brotherhood," who *ad interim*, meet thus on the astral plane for consultation. The sign of greeting is exchanged, then the Master asks, audibly: "What know ye, my brothers, of interest to the visible brotherhood?"

Then answered one of the forms, his voice sounding as if far off, and yet every word falling clearly upon the inner senses:

"Rejoice with me, my brothers! There has come to the school with which I am connected, a young girl whose mystic powers are of the most pronounced character. This, I already perceive. From time to time, I will inform you of what she may develop, which may seem suitable for our purpose. Is this in accord with your views, my brothers?"

The answer, "Be it as you say," was startlingly distinct.

A change of feature was also discernible on the face of each—a lighting up as if with enthusiastic earnestness. Thus was Elsie doomed to trials from which nothing but the acquired strength of previous incarnations could possi-

bly deliver her. Other matters were discussed before this session closed, but as they were not relevant to our story, we will not linger to describe matters which are sure not to bring good to the world in their ultimate outcome. So let us return to our heroine.

CHAPTER X.

ELSIE'S preparations had been duly made, and when the school selected opened its school year, she entered herself upon its roster of students.

Unusually bright and gifted, she at once attracted the attention of her teachers, and especially of one of the most staid and dignified of the professors, who began evidently to seek her friendship in a quiet, undemonstrative way. There were no suggestions whatever on the lower plane, nor anything even of the slightest to which she could object or take umbrage; but there was a wall of some kind which prevented her feeling free towards him.

As the months went on and she became interested in her studies, and accustomed to the change from the freedom of home-life, she found herself very much attracted by some of the lines on which the professor was considered an authority.

The more she sought to know the more she was attracted towards this particular instructor. It was also a fact that the subjects dis-

cussed related to the unseen, and were of the class of which the ordinary man disclaims all knowledge whatever. But the professor, in his teachings, seemed always to speak in the present, and of his own personal knowledge, giving new life and added zest to that which is usually called a very dry subject.

Finally three or four of the class were singled out for special instruction; why, the reader by this time can probably make a good guess. This special class met three times a week, at the professor's house, in a little class-room opening out of the professor's study. The hours of meeting were, at the first, set in the early evening, and from beginning to end of the six months which ended so peculiarly and unexpectedly to the professor, there was nothing on the physical plane to which the highest, purest chivalry of that plane could take exceptions, or calumny breathe a whisper of slander against. The class consisted of four young ladies, all impressible on the psychic plane.

None were more sensitive than Elsie, but while all seemed to possess this gift, there was a difference in the manifestation as well as in the capability for induction which each manifested. But Elsie, besides her unusual

powers exercised at will, seemed pervaded with an indescribable dominant force that made itself felt as soon as any attempt at will-power was projected toward her by another. It was not exactly resentful or antagonistic, but a mixture in which any selfishness was left out and overcome by the influence of the mighty self-poise of the spirit itself.

But whatever might be the relative powers of these spirits, they were all united in one purpose and thought, and that purpose was the seeking of knowledge—a knowledge that might become wisdom when fully comprehended and assimilated.

Study on abstruse and occult lines was succeeded by experiments, first on the plainest and simplest lessons of introversion, passing from easy examples by almost insensible gradation to the higher and more difficult; commencing with the effects of thought upon one's self and then upon companions, until standing on the threshold of the great gate of the temple of the Universe, they essayed to lay hold of the mighty powers whose mastery is the lesson set to man to be learned during the ages of incarnation, failing which he is remanded to the lives, to do his task over again many times, perhaps, before he succeeds

in the accomplishment by which man becomes a god.

Right here a difference that had been widening as the instructions went on, grew so marked as actually to delay the progress of the class. Part of the members seemed to lose in a degree their desire to progress; a part became careless of the drill that was absolutely necessary if they proceeded—in fact, all seemed disconcerted but Elsie, who grew more and more fearless as she grasped more and more fully the knowledge that lies behind the veil. This condition was the result of direct resistance from the keepers and guardians, who, like the flaming sword of Genesis, keep off the timid and weak. Bulwer tells us of a "dweller on the threshold," and all writers who write from knowledge always intimate what may be expected by the explorer into untried regions.

There was also a singular difference between the action of Elsie and her companions in passing into the hypnotic state. Her associates all seemed to surrender passively to the guidance of the master-will without volition of their own, as one submits to be blindfolded and led by another. But Elsie, simply by the force of her own will, appeared to consent

or comply with the request of the Master, and whatever she did on the psychic plane was with the full sense of self-consciousness. This explanation seems necessary in view of what followed. The old professor often looked steadily at her in a sort of dazed way, but whatever he saw he did not confide to anyone else.

The whole class had so progressed in the language of the silence, that the act commonly known as thought transference had become an almost perfect occurrence, and the visible presence was not needed for knowledge of each other.

The second year of Elsie's school term had closed, bringing commendation and honor to her as an exceptional and brilliant student. She returned to her Western home for the long vacation. We must now turn our thoughts to the other actors in this o'er true tale.

CHAPTER XI.

NOW, let us return to that lonely house which we have before described in these pages. It is again time for the regular meeting of the terrible seven. It is deemed desirable by the companions that those who have been under the professor's training should be summoned to the assembly. The room in which we saw at our last visit the casket and the machinery for noting the lapse of time, has been removed, and in its place stand now, on a half ellipse, seven chairs—three on each side of the presiding brother. In the focus of this curve stands a huge globe of glass, three feet in diameter, resting in a set of brazen claws, which bear it aloft from the floor. Other than these no furnishings are visible, save a square block of polished onyx just beyond the globe, rising about two feet from the floor. This block has a queer trick of lighting up and then becoming dull again, at the same time emitting a low musical note, which is all very nice, perhaps, but gives a peculiar sensation up and down one's spine when watching it, and a feeling that we might be prepared to expect al-

most anything else to follow this premonition.

There was another curious circumstance about the change thus made in this room. It was only one of many which had taken place there from time to time, and yet no material of any kind had ever been brought here by visible means since the summer when the mechanics had finished sealing the upper story from the outside world; neither had there been any artisans, in the body, who had sought admission from the keeper since that time. Occasionally between the full-moon periods he had thought at times there were signs of motion, noises, etc., in these mysteriously closed rooms, but sagely reasoning that it was no concern of his, he wisely kept silence, and made no investigation. But whatever the seven willed to be done here, was always surely done.

The preliminary exercises have been finished, and the seven are seated in their order according to their numbers. The light, previously mentioned, is elevated and piercing.

The presiding brother turns to the professor, and says: "Let us commence; you may operate, and we will assist." The hands are folded, the chin drops upon the breast, and a silence in which the pulsating of the blood in its flow through the heart becomes an audible sound,

presses down closer and closer. No motion, not even the breathing, gave the slightest token that these were other than statues.

At the first assumption of this position, the great glass globe seemed to cloud up a little in its interior; the filmy mistiness became thicker and thicker, moulding itself into human form, until the likeness of one of Elsie's fellow-students, above the waist, was visible, appeared as if imprsioned in this huge sphere. When the figure had become fully defined, a voice, cleaving the silence as the bow of the ship cleaves the waters, said: "Take thy place as a free soul, and answer as thou seest."

Hardly had the words made themselves audible when the figure, disappearing from the globe, stood at full length on the pedestal of onyx, a misty, gray drapery falling from the shoulders to the feet. Here, standing quite still, the Sin Laeca answered questions—not of her own volition nor of her own knowledge, but from such perception as came to her on the astral plane when thus liberated from the body, and in full contact with the astral currents. At last the shadowy form was dismissed, and at once faded out into nothingness. In a similar manner, one after another, all the members of the class were called, and

all responded with a single exception. Nor did there seem to be any particular design or plan in the calling, save the experience of the experiment, for nothing of import was conveyed by either question or answer.

But now minutes elapsed and no sign of substance appeared, either within the globe or on the onyx pedestal. Then suddenly, throbbing in the intense silence, comes a musical sound such as we have mentioned once before. The note of vibration increases in its expression of power, grows stronger and stronger, and still there is no response, and now there comes a sudden hush; words seem to formulate themselves in the air—words of awful meaning. It is such an adjuration as the ancient record tells us Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, could not resist, but obeyed. Hardly had the words ceased to tremble on the air when a pillar of cloud rested on the pedestal of onyx, not coming, as the other shapes had, through the great globe, but, disdaining bonds, had fulfilled its obligation. The cloud slowly settled into the proportions of a tall, majestically-formed man, whose presence could never be mistaken for any less than the Master it was. No sooner had it become fully visible than, with a look of sternness upon its

face, and eyes that scintillated like burning coals, taking into its glance, seemingly, the eyes of all the seven at once, it uttered a single prolonged word. The sound was strange and most weird in its effect; it was not loud, but was as piercing and distinct as if it had been. It had a remote cadence, but was as forceful as if pronounced near at hand. The effect of the sound was startingly wonderful, for on the instant there stood beside each chair a form similar to the one at ease in the center.

"Why have ye disquieted me to bring me hither? Have ye forgotten the terms of the compact with which ye were obligated in the Great Temple, or are ye of mind to forswear yourselves? Ye know whatsoever the neophyte or the initiate may perceive on the astral plane because of the limitations, may be reported to whom they will; but nothing, not even the smallest jot or title, once given in charge of the Hierophant, can ever be communicated. Ye have erred in that ye have failed to seek wisdom with your usual discretion. By the obligation of the Brotherhood, I demand release from the power of your wills, which these many days has been overshadowing me; otherwise will the penality of the violators of compact rest upon you."

As one man, the shapes replied: "We have erred, and we withdraw from all interference with you, both now and in the future. We hear and witness your words."

A moment of intense darkness ensued, and nothing remained visible save the furnishing of the room, as at the first, and the seated forms of the Seven.

CHAPTER XII.

IT had been a warm day in the early part of August, and Elsie had been helping her mother about the household duties, for when at home she never allowed her mother to traverse alone the necessary round of routine work that pertains to every home. They were now, as ever, companions. Elsie's schooling instead of putting her beyond her mother, had only increased the daughter's affection. Their relationship had become like that of two sisters, only Elsie took the place of the elder. It was very beautiful, and the best of it was its reality. There was no need of any pretence whatever between these two. The day of which we speak had brought with it more than the usual amount of cares, as the summer days often will to the farmers' wives and daughters. When night came the rest of sleep was most welcome to all.

The house had been finished according to the original plan. Everything about it had been well-built, and of the best materials obtainable. The farm was kept up to its highest point of production; it not only furnished

a living, but a constantly increasing surplus that, by its prudent investment, had made Thomas Holmes a member of the most independent class in the world—a wealthy farmer. Nor had the wealth flowing to them in any sense made them penurious, for unostentatiously their helpful hands lightened the burdens of the sick and suffering all about them. None had bitter words for them. Their warm friends were many and true.

But because the old homestead had been fully completed, Elsie's chamber was in the second story on the northeast corner. It was a large, square room, and diagonally opposite from her parents' room in the southwest corner.

On the night of which we now speak, somewhat fatigued by the duties of the day, she had retired early. As she disrobed, the light of the full-moon in the eastern sky fully lighted her chamber. Two large windows with inside blinds, looked toward the east. One of the windows opened near the head of the bed, but the blinds were closed, although the window itself was open; but the other near the foot of the bed admitted through the open blinds the full light of the moon. Elsie, finally having put away or folded up the day's belongings, lay down.

in thought, thankfully for the expression of But the feeling of fatigue, at the first, possessing her had vanished, and a feeling of quiet self-possession had come in its place. So she lay looking at the moonlight as it reflected against the background of blackness beyond. Suddenly a luminous form seemed to disentangle itself from the light, and approaching a few paces toward Elsie, said:

"There are those who desire knowledge, reckless and careless of harm to thee. They will soon call thee. Whatsoever the past permits will be done. Thou hast no need of fear, for the bond of obligation is twofold in its operation. It also restrains while it impels; no brother can harm another when once he is made known as such. Rest thou free of all infirmities of thy present incarnation, for thy present form will in no sense hamper thy action; moreover, the time has come when the strength of the incarnation on the physical plane will stand thee in good stead for the reinforcing of that which has now come to thee out of the centuries."

Elsie, accustomed all her life to strange occurrences, was not even startled by this display, although not comprehending its full import, and to the quiet, assuring tones replied,

interest in her welfare. Then she lapsed into the unconsciousness of rest, from which she thought she was wakened by a strain of music. It seemed to be a prolonged sound, keyed on the note fa. So strong and well-sustained is this strain in its far-reaching cadence that nothing, animate or inanimate, could in anywise resist the call of power.

Elsie's sleep deepens; the breathing grows slower and slower; there are none to see nor save. Just above the form, recumbent in like position and shadowed in the atmosphere as solids are shadowed in clear water, appears a perfect duplicate of the body resting beneath. This shadow, the astral body, assumes a standing posture, and as it does so a singular transition has passed over it.

It is in no manner a likeness of Elsie, but a strong, vigorous man, with the face of one who had suffered and won. It was a face of set purpose and conscious potency. The body was clad in priestly robes. A line of light passes from the brain of the sleeper through the heart of the double, and reaches far to the east. The vibration of sound continues. The light pulsates in response and harmony, and the astral form glides away along the direct ray of call.

What its adventures were, we have detailed in a previous chapter.

While these events were transpiring a thunderstorm was brooding in the southwest, and its low, muttering growl had awakened the mother who crossed over into Elsie's room, to see if all was ready to receive the coming storm. As she stepped over the threshold, with her eyes fixed on the semi-darkness in which the daughter lay, she perceived with the quick intuition of a sensitive, the ray of light attached to Elsie's brain. Hardly had the sight been realized when a tall, majestic figure appeared over the sleeper, for just an instant, stopped, smiled kindly upon the mother, who felt a strange, cordial uplifting under the influence of the recognition. Then the figure seemed to dissolve into the single thread of light which now did not extend beyond the chamber wall, and finally was indrawn into the sleeper. All this took place far more rapidly than it can be written. When the mother reached the side of the couch and bent over the daughter, her breathing had grown deep and normal, a slight flush overspread the fair face, and a little moisture upon the forehead was all that gave any token of the sympathy of the physical in the awful struggle on the unseen

planes in which the unwillingly summoned had answered the obligation that forever binds, and frustrated evil because selfish intent, being able so to do, on account of the accumulating soul-force of the mighty Ego, now inspiring this personality.

The good mother was enough of a proficient in the understanding of hidden things as not to be startled at the vision, nor to seek to wake Elsie from her sound sleep. She moved quietly about the room, making everything safe against the storm which now, blinding flash upon flash, with a continuous peal of thunder, spread over the whole sky, while great rushes of wind in equal gusts shook the house to its foundations. This was the direct result of the unbalancing of vibrations by the interjection of the power of the human will as manifested at the point where the seven were met. The challenge, the reply and the short, sharp conflict had changed polarity and upset vibrations, culminating in the storm sweeping so violently and rapidly from the southwest to the northeast along the direct track pursued by the journey in the astral form.

Man little realizes how far the tornadoes and cyclones upon the earth are due to his frenzies of passion, emotion and selfish desires;

but their failure to perceive it, does not destroy the truth of the fact. The vibration of a single thought makes its mark on the surroundings; how much more, then, when there is any degree of concentration or united action?

In the morning the storm had subsided and left its freshening force on all the surroundings. Elsie came down to breakfast happy and cheerful as usual, but inclined to be a little absent-minded. Her mother rallied her and her father joked her, all of which she took in the kind spirit it was intended, and finally said:

"Mother, I had a strange dream last night."

"Indeed," said the mother, suppressing her curiosity; "but thou'rt always having dreams, Elsie; what was there queer about this?"

"It seemed so real," replied the girl; "it can't be shaken off, try as I will, but it is just as strong on my mind as anything that happened yesterday; but I'll tell it to you, and you can judge, but I can't give you any idea how real it seems to me.

"It seemed as if I was myself, and yet somebody else very much older and stronger than I, and that I was standing in my room upstairs when I heard some one at a distance call me. It was not by the name you call me, but some

name I never heard before, and yet I recognized it as belonging to me. More than that, it seemed as if I must answer the call because I had promised to. You know I never did make such an absurd promise to anybody.

"I was wondering how I would get to the caller, when I felt as if I was moving through the air very swiftly without any effort of my own. All this time there was a strange feeling of being double, and that the 'other one' was doing and I only consenting, a kind of echo in word and thought and action, and also a feeling as if I were many thousands of years old, and knew almost everything, and if I would only stop to think about it a minute, I could tell to man the greatest secrets, such as how to make gold, how to fly, how to live until you wanted to die. More than that, it appeared that I was one of a great many thousands—I thought I heard a voice say 144,000, who were pledged by the most solemn obligation to help each other in and at all times and places whatsoever. I remembered, too, that this oath never could be put aside, but was always binding whether one was living or dead."

Elsie had said all this as if speaking for another and not herself, and her father and mother looked on as usual, wonderingly; but at

this point she lost that impelled appearance, and went on more like herself:

"All this happened at the same time with my journey, and in a great deal less time than I am telling it, it was accomplished. Like a change in dreams I saw a house, which I entered. No sooner had I done that than I felt as if some invisible mantle was thrown about me, whose effect would be the loss of my own will-power. Indignant and determined, I used my utmost force in resistance, and freed myself from the danger menacing me, and as I felt myself thus freed, I found I was standing on a platform of some curious marble in which there were dark, bloody lines running through a ground of a soft flesh-color. Not only did it have the tint, but it also had the warmth of the living flesh, and the peculiar magnetic sensation always felt to a greater or less degree in the touch of the human body. It was to all intents as if I were standing on somebody. No sooner had my feet touched this than a thrill passed upward from them to my head, giving me a self-possession and assurance and perfect freedom from fear. Before me in a half-circle sat seven persons. As I looked at them, I saw they were all wise and strong. But on their long white robes blazed

a five-pointed star, with two points up and one point down. I knew by this that they had perverted their gifts and wisdom to selfish personal uses, and, therefore, had become Black Magicians.

"Standing stretched to my utmost height, I pronounced some word that I cannot now recall. At the sound of it, each of the seven stepped out of their bodies, and became as I was. I then made a speech to them. I can feel the thrill of the words I said now"—here a visible shudder passed over her—"only I don't remember what they were. But the seven did not seem to make any objection, only acknowledging what I said to be true, and then I don't remember anything until I found myself once more in bed, and daylight shining in, it all seemed so real."

"Perhaps it was, lass," said the mother. "I am not sure if thou'rt in the body all last night or not."

The father said naught, but pondered all the more deeply.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN the vacation was over, Elsie went back to school to spend another two years. The professor, of whom we have spoken, did not have charge of her classes in any study of these latter years of the course, so she did not come so closely in contact with him. But their relations to each other seemed changed, for the old man looked up to her with a quiet deference whenever they chanced to meet. Nor was there any attempt made to renew the old meetings or experiments. It seemed as if there were a tacit understanding to put the matter away, by all who had there essayed to try their flight into the awful regions and shadows of the unseen.

The rest of her course was uneventful until the Commencement exercises. Because of her ability, her meritorious conduct and her scholarly record, she was made the valedictorian of her class. Her paper had been carefully prepared, and had been approved by the faculty. Its subject was "Woman's Freedom."

The day had come with all its hopes and fears, anticipations and realities. The class,

instead of dressing in the usual white draperies, as if they were literary corpses, and followed Elsie's voice and example, and each selected colors harmonizing with their own. The stuffs were of soft texture, and made plainly and fittingly. The effect was that of a bouquet of lovely flowers as they grouped on the stage.

Elsie's dress was of a peach-bloom, modeled in its folds after the antique, with a single red rose fastened at the neck. The exercises had been of the most satisfactory and successful character. The diplomas had all been awarded, and every one of the great audience watched eagerly for the coming of the simple name, Elsie Holmes, who had, without envy, been awarded by her fellows and teachers the highest honors of the day.

Her father and mother, plain-looking people, were in the auditorium, anxious with love's care, their darling should do well. As she came upon the stage her perfect ease and self-possession was noticeable. Her paper was in her hand, as is the custom. The first two or three words were of address, and the voice seemed gauging the size of the space to be filled. As her first sentence was completed, not a person in the whole audience failed to

hear the concluding words, and from that time to the end of the discourse her strong, flexible tones filled the whole hall with their clear, bird-like utterances.

The first few sentences were read from her paper, but here laying her paper upon the small reading stand on the stage, she seemed to go on from memory. Her statement of the enthrallment of part of the race, differentiated from the other part for purpose, was startling in its earnest portrayal and pathetic in its details. It was the sketching of a master hand. Tears and smiles alternated in the audience, and occasionally the house shook with the unwonted thunders of applause. Never in all the history of the institution had such an event occurred before.

Picture the scene; a hall crowded until there was not standing-room, every one listening as if life itself depended on catching every intonation; upon the stage a girlish figure, from whom, as from a master in oratory, poured a stream of fiery eloquence, pleading for her sex, the mothers, wives and sisters whom the vibrations of the lower on the physical plane had crushed into slavery without its privileges of responsibility. The essay of a school-girl had become, by some strange

transmutation, the oration of a wonderful intellect. In closing she said:

"The duties which make up the lives of the man and the woman, are complements each of the other; they are always on the same plane. As we who are here present are now Americans, so we, the same egos, were in the long ages of the past Atlantians, Egyptians and East Indians. As we all are now, either man or woman, so have all our egos in the past been subjected to the discipline of both forms of manifestation. Who shall say, then, to the wearer of a winter or summer dress that this or that is inferior, when both serve equally well? I see in the near future a dawning perception of the truth that the same is equal to itself. Woman is man's equal, his comrade, and not his inferior."

Thus she closed, while round after round of applause filled the house. Turning to her schoolmates, her words of inspiration, hope and energy left their impression upon every member of the class, an impress that made itself felt through all succeeding life.

Addressing the faculty, who had been astonished at this sudden unfoldment before their eyes of occult power, she tendered them in such form as it had never come before, for

herself and fellows, the sincere thanks of all whose growth and development they had fostered.

Then the great organ pealed for the closing anthem; the audience was dismissed. As Elsie stood chatting with her father, mother and some of her friends, while waiting for the great crowd to disperse, several strangers sought introduction to Elsie.

Among these were a widow lady and her son, a young man of some twenty-three years of age. The mother, herself a worker in the cause of woman's independence, came to thank Elsie for her brilliant appeal to the justice of the world for her sex.

The young man shook hands on being introduced, and a quick, flashing glance passed from eye to eye. The introduction in the outer was accomplished, but they had no need in the real and inner for an introduction. Again was Dickens' aphorism proved: "And thus ever, by day and night, under the sun and under the stars, climbing the dusky hills, and toiling along the weary plains, journeying by land and journeying by sea, coming and going so strangely to meet and to act and react on one another, move all restless travelers through the pilgrimage of life."

The mother, Mrs. Glenham, asked Elsie to visit her home near Milwaukee during the summer. To this, Elsie consented provisionally, leaving details for after arrangement. The next day found Elsie with her father and mother on their way to their western home.

"Elsie, lass, when did thee learn thy big speech?" asked the father.

"But I did not learn anything," said Elsie; "it all spoke itself. I did not know what I was saying; it seemed to be somebody else all the time. But if you all liked it, wasn't it better than if I should have read just a prosy paper?"

And so that matter was closed, to be remembered and talked of by those who were immediate participants in the scene, and as surely and slowly to be forgotten, as the days went by. There was one point that must be noticed in passing; that was the very little exhaustion attending this effort, marking the difference of the awakening of the higher self, the potency of the plastic mind; and the obsession or possession of a feebler soul by overshadowing force.

So Elsie found herself once more at home amongst her neighbors and friends. The incidents of the graduation day got to their ears

in a modified way, but they were not surprised, for as a friend said: "You might always expect Elsie to be queer, although she is as nice and good a girl as ever lived." This was the universal testimony. Thus she held her station, beloved by all, doing the duties that laid nearest her.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN a few days came a note from Mrs. Clenham, repeating her invitation, and fixing the time for the last of August. As there was nothing to prevent, and her parents had no objection, only a little feeling of loss in having her away from home, Elsie accepted the invitation, and on the appointed day took the cars for R———, Mrs. Clenham's residence, where the delightful situation of the house and grounds, located within sight of the ever-moving lake, brought to Elsie a new sensation which was very enjoyable indeed.

Young Mr. Clenham was very attentive. There were long carriage-drives, and moonlight sails in a trim little yacht, and readings and talks of mornings in the library of the mansion. It was a new experience, but one which she received easily, and without confusion, for great souls are not easily discomposed by the accidents of the outer life, but assimilate readily their alloted quota, without regard to the remainder.

In this instance the course of true love for once, seemed about to run smoothly. A few

days before her visit was to terminate, the three were sitting in the library. They had been talking of the prehistoric conditions of that part of the country, and wondering what its future would be. The full moon shone in, sending a brilliant flood of light through the library windows.

As it happened, the three were sitting in a triangle, through the base of which came the moonlight, striking the floor about the center of the figure, Elsie's position being at the apex, the son to the right and the mother to the left. Through the window could be seen the expanse of the great lake, whose surface, kissed by the dancing evening zephyr, broke up into thousands of facets, each reflecting the light of the queen of night. It was a perfect night, Elsie had said, with a great deal of earnestness:

"Why do the dead hold back from us their knowledge, when it might be of service to us?"

To this sentiment assent had been made by the others, when from above them, in far-off intonation, but clear and distinct, came the words:

"Because the living refuse to hear that which is offered to them."

Startled a little, but not surprised, because like all advanced minds, Mrs. C. and her son

were both familiar with the slowly unfolding forms of communications with the unseen, they waited in respectful silence to hear or see the outcome. Suddenly their attention was attracted by a luminous spot upon the floor where the moonlight struck it. It did not seem to be brighter than the rest of the light, but simply to have more substance to it. Quickly this grew, and expanded as a whirling column of the height and figure of a tall and well-formed man. Then the motion stopped, and a messenger from the invisible stood in their presence.

Elsie reclining in her easy chair, did not seem conscious of her surroundings.

The hostess, with her usual grave kindness, said:

"Who are you, and why have you come to see us?"

"I am one of the temple-dwellers of the long centuries ago. I come partly for your instruction and partly for my own pleasure. Hold thyself without fear in the critical moment, and mayhap something may come to thee and thine of advantage."

"You are most truly welcome," was Mrs. C.'s reply, for she was a woman of a peculiarly fearless nature. She often said: "I do not

know what the word fear means." "Say on, sir, we are attentive to your message, and will surely heed your instruction."

"The great city that stands on the edge of the waters was preceded by one mightier and larger than the inhabitants of the present city have ever dreamed of. To the north along the sea dwelt many men mighty in wisdom, who knew how to use unseen elemental forces for their own will and pleasure. When their selfish desires at last brought disaster upon them, they left the elementals chained to the spot. Among them was a tribe of powerful fire spirits. These have once broken loose from their prison, and many at that time escaped for good and the whole world knows of the damage they inflicted. The remainder are likely to escape from their bondage at any time, not only in the city of Dan, but in Beersheba, or any point in the whole country between. This city, in which so many elementals have been chained and harnessed in iron and steel and brass, so long as their harness shall repress and hold the dread energy of the mighty ones, will prosper, but their keepers must be careful and vigilant, or in an unregarded moment the fierce, the merciless, will be in control.

"Now as to thy own immediate concerns: If the young man, thy son, shall desire to follow the physical law of thy social order and take the woman to wife it is well, for they were dear friends of the old times. The ancient ties will not be broken whatever happens in the outer. But he must not expect service from her as runs your law, nor undivided attention. If he desires, let him plight his faith before she leaves this dwelling, to be soon followed by consummation. Then let the marriage journey be toward the southwest, where something of importance awaits them, as one or she alone. Obey the law, and peace be thine."

So saying he seemed to become absorbed in the moonlight still brilliantly shining in the room.

The group moved not for several minutes, then Elsie gave a little shudder and gasp, with a half-suppressed exclamation:

"Why, Mrs. Clenham, have I been asleep? But I had a beautiful dream. I thought I was standing right out there," and she pointed to the spot where the figure had stood, "but I had on somebody's dress that did not quite fit me. I saw such a great furnace of fire, and it seemed so hot. Then it seemed as if I was down among great stretches of cactus,

and green groves where oranges and figs and all kinds of tropical fruits grew wild, and there were large buildings, some of them cut out of solid stone, and I could see into the mountains, and everything inside of them was as plain as if it was on the outside. I could see, also, the big veins of gold and silver and other metals. It sounded to me as if somebody said: 'These are yours for use, under direction. Will you accept the trust?' But before I could answer, everything seemed to fade."

"Well, that is as astonishing as the rest of it," and Mrs. Clenham told Elsie what she and Arthur had seen.

"What is your idea, Mrs. Clenham, of the method in which materializations occur, and why should I go to sleep? If any of those mysterious things happen, I generally do, and lose them all."

"So far as I have had a chance to investigate the subject, I believe all writers of both the far East and West concur it the statement that the astral body of the sensitive is projected as plastic substance, and the strong thought or desire of those present, either visible or invisible, forms itself thereon, as the light forms itself into a picture on the sensi-

tive photograph plate. The sitters thus may each get back a response for themselves in accordance with their own wishes, no two having seen the same form any more than they can see the same rainbow, a thing by the law of optics utterly impossible. In other cases the astral body personates nobody but itself, and being in touch with the flow of universal thought currents, and in possession for the time being of all the knowledge acquired during many lives, can recall the past and predict the future. But it is a question concerning the most subtle, delicate and elusive element in nature, belonging to the invisible and spiritual, of which our five senses have no certain knowledge. What little comes to us by way of perception is the result of the already slowly developing sixth sense, that must belong to the Sixth Race, which are slowly dropping in among us in the recognized sensitives of the present day. These scattered personalities are the advance couriers of the mighty army who will soon possess the earth."

Here she stopped, saying: "Well, I have made quite a preachment. This may not be correct, but it seems fairly reasonable to me, and has the support of a good many strong thinkers."

"I am much obliged," said Elsie. "I feel a great many things to be true that I cannot explain, and I believe you are right."

The evening before Elsie went home, she and Arthur went out on the lake alone, and there, under auspicious surroundings, and because the stars willed it, they pledged their mutual troth after the manner of friends who seek a lifelong comradeship, without any of the effervescence which, coming solely from the physical, born in a moment, dying within an hour, so often leaves the heart's best affections stranded for the whole of the succeeding life on the earth-plane. They were both of age; they understood the true mating to be of the soul, and that sex was entirely a property of the physical, was a differentiation, a mark set on Cain, the Fifth Race, that it should not perish from the earth. All this they accepted as an inevitable legacy, and not as the beginning and end of married life. It is this last view which makes it man's error and woman's dishonor.

Their compact was, however, conditioned and subject to ratification by the co-ordinate powers of both houses.

CHAPTER XV.

NO objection to the union was offered by Mrs. Clenham, neither did Elsie's father or mother, later on, offer any strenuous objection. While they felt that their daughter had no need in the usual meaning to marry, they looked upon marriage as honorable, and this view was reinforced by their own happy experience, and they were satisfied in her choice.

There being no impediment to the union, it was settled that the union should take place on October 5, 1876, Elsie's twenty-first birthday.

That which was needed to be done was done quietly and unostentatiously. The wedding took place at the Holmes' homestead. The young people, instead of simply saying "yes" to the questions of the officiating clergyman, each pledged themselves distinctly to the other for all the duties and incidents of the life that might come to them while they should walk together in this incarnation. Having due respect for the law that is the foundation of all harmony, the necessary legal formalities were

then completed, and the proper authority pronounced them man and wife. Bound thus by an oath that cannot be escaped from except as its conditions are fulfilled, they went forth on their wedding trip.

Influenced by the word of their celestial visitant, they were to spend the winter in Mexico, and thither lay their journey. They made the City of Mexico their headquarters. From this point they made excursions to various places in that marvelous country as their fancy dictated. They had secured for their guide and traveling companion an intelligent gentleman, a creole, who, naturally keen and quick-witted, had been so much interested in the history of his native land that he had become almost perfectly acquainted with all the local traditions, and at the same time he possessed that sympathy for occult subjects which shows the underlying kinship.

One day Mr. and Mrs. Clenham had been talking of the rumors always rife in Mexico—of the great city unapproachable, but sometimes visible among the mountains of the southwest.

"I wonder," said Elsie, "if we could make that section of the country a visit? Perhaps we could get a dissolving view of it, anyway."

"Well, let us talk with Jose about it," rejoined Arthur; "it is certainly worth the while to make the effort; and who knows, Elsie, what may come of it?"

So when their courier next came for instructions they asked him about the mysterious city, and if he had ever heard of it.

"Si, senor," shrugging his shoulders; "many a man has seen that city, and started on his way to find it. Almost all have lost themselves, and after many days have been glad to give up the search, and some, senora," here his voice fell almost to a whisper, "have never been heard of afterward."

"Do you know the way toward where it is supposed to be?" asked Elsie.

"Si, senora; it lies many days' journey to the southwest among the mountains."

"Will you make the necessary preparations and guide us toward it as far as we can go?" asked Elsie.

"If the senora really means it, certainly; a Spaniard can go wherever a lady might desire to go. I will attend you."

And so, in a manner, was lightly settled the onward movement of an event which of all Elsie's strange experiences was to be the strangest and most inexplicable.

Amongst all the native tribes of southwestern Mexico is rife a legend of a magnificent city among the mountains, to which strangers are not allowed to find access. Some of the most daring of the natives, as well as a few of the hardy scouts who find the West and the Southwest such genial soil for their work and adventures, have climbed high upon the mountain peaks, and from thence have viewed the glories and beauties of a city lying upon a wide spreading plateau or table land, with an immense rock-temple on one side, a vast lake in the center, and innumerable buildings of stone, all shut in and rendered perfectly inaccessible by an immense wall of lofty mountain peaks. The people who dwell there have no particular knowledge of the world we know, nor desire to mingle with it. Those who from the outer seek admittance are baffled and misled in their effort to gain access.

When one of the natives of this city seeks to investigate the other parts of the world, if overborne by his eager curiosity, he is first warned what the consequence will be. If still insisting, he is allowed to go forth and pronounce upon himself a sentence of banishment during the remaining period of his earth-life, under pledge of secrecy as to his native

city, returning only when the body should be laid aside. The people who dwell here have attained marvelous knowledge of the spirit forces and their uses on the plane of matter. Governed by the fixed laws of nature, they are quietly waiting for the time when they will be forced to take part in the restoration of the waste places of the earth, and their rebuilding and their uplifting to that condition of harmony and peace designed by the Infinite thought.

It was toward this city Elsie was now called in the invisible, and impelled by the action of forces she had herself set in motion many thousands of years ago. But let us not anticipate.

Their preparations were fully made, the party consisting of three young men, with Elsie and her husband, and a half-dozen attendants set out. Whatever the courier had deemed necessary to provide for the excursion he had been supplied carte blanche for.

They were to go on horseback, by easy stages, while their belongings were carried on burros, the serviceable little donkeys of that country.

Without particular arrangement, the first start was made so that at the first camp the

new moon hung low over the setting sun.

Their course lay south of west toward the mountains and mountainous country bordering on the Gulf of Tehuantepec. Their daily routine was: Travel from sunrise to the noon hour, then a two hours' siesta; after that, in the lengthening shadows, they traveled on until about an hour of sunset, when they would camp for the night.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON the tenth day out they reached a very high altitude. For the three days previous they had been constantly ascending the foot-hills, and during all this time they had seen no Indians, although they had been specially warned of the ugly temper of these tribes by their acquaintances before they started, and had now for several days been passing through territory noted for the unceremonious familiarity of the natives. Notwithstanding all this, they had met with neither trouble nor hindrance from this source. On the night now mentioned, they had halted for the purpose of going into camp. An exclamation from Jose called the attention of all the party. Looking to his eager face, and then in the direction of his outstretched finger, they saw something in a far-off valley that looked like houses. The sun's declination was such as to show the structures to the best advantage. The use of field-glasses by the party soon convinced them that the wonderful unknown city was before them.

A careful examination revealed that it was

regularly laid out in streets and peopled with a race who evidently knew something about civilization.

The houses were of stone, and were surrounded by yards in which could be discerned growing flowers and shrubs. On all sides were evidences of taste in the inhabitants.

The location of the city seemed to be in a vast amphitheatre that could only be reached, if at all, by a long, narrow defile from the west, leading into the mountains from the Pacific coast side. From the size, it might be inferred to contain between 5,000 and 6,000 inhabitants.

Taking accurately their bearings from a compass, they went into camp and waited eagerly for the dawn. Their apparently objectless journey had suddenly received a mighty impulse toward a definite conclusion.

At the first dawning, the whole company was astir, and as the light grew stronger the field-glasses were anxiously turned again upon this wonderful spot, but owing to the position of the sun the view was not as distinct as the night previous. Still it did not diminish in size, nor vanish as a mirage. So soon as breakfast could be finished camp was struck, and they started full of hope of being able to

reach this wonder of the American continent.

To their surprise and pleasure the defiles seemed to be easier to travel over and the roughness of the broken ways not so troublesome as they had been at first; all things seemed to help them in their effort to move toward the nameless city. For three days they advanced steadily on the course indicated by their compass without getting another sight of the place they sought. Most of the route was made at such low levels as to give no further chance for a distant view.

On the noon of the thirteenth day from the City of Mexico, they stopped for their siesta. All the morning they had been traveling through a narrow canon, on each side of which impassable, rocky barriers held them to their course, while a small stream ran along one side of the rough and rocky path that constantly ascended at an angle of from 15 to 25 degrees. No green thing grew here, for the sun never reached down into its twilight depths. There was no attraction in it for man or animal, and besides this was a feeling of awesomeness which even the strongest minded of the party could not shake off, and it was with the utmost difficulty they could compel the attendants to move forward; but this they

finally did, although with much crossing of themselves, and muttered prayers to the virgin mother for safety and help. It was as if invisible sentries held the way, and constantly challenged their right to proceed. At last the defile broadened out upon a plateau of some quarter of an acre in extent. Here, on the farther side from the entrance, a bleak precipice lifted itself squarely up between two and three hundred feet. It was absolutely inaccessible; no cleft nor crevice appeared in the cold, hard quartz; nor was there shrub nor plant to give vantage nor hold, on all its surface. To the right and left the ground was of such formation that there was no way in sight by which this mighty wall of rock could be flanked. From the junction of the precipice and the surface of the plateau a stream of clear, sparkling water gushed forth, skirted the edge, and lost itself in the canon.

Here in an absolute solitude they prepared for rest first, and, after consultation, to do whatever might be thought best. The surface of the plateau was arable; there was quite a growth of grass. The animals were hobbled and turned out to graze, while the remainder of the party, after a light repast and indulgence in their cigarettes, concluded to

divide themselves into scouting parties to explore the immediate neighborhood, and ascertain if there was any other path or mode of egress, save where they had entered. So after fixing up a shelter-tent for Elsie, they scattered, with the understanding that they should all return by sunset.

So Elsie and the animals were left alone. The shadows of the cliff hung lower and lower and the sun dropped farther and farther down on its western course. There seemed to be a peculiar fascination to her in gazing up the side of the cliff, it was so immense, so strong. Watching the descending line of shade, she noticed all at once a little bunch of green. Wondering, she had looked so long at that part of the bare rock without having perceived the patch of vivid color on that bare, bleak outline, she rubbed her eyes and looked again. Now a brilliant, crimson blossom nestled invitingly in the foliage. Astonished, with almost a child's eagerness and impulsiveness, she started forward to attempt to gather the prize. On close approach, two or three knob-like projections afforded her foothold. Light and sure of foot she soon reached and plucked the flower. As she did so, and rose from a stooping posture, a wicket-gate in the side of the

rock opened, disclosing a broad passageway within, and a tall, pleasant faced man standing at the entrance. Where had she seen him before? The impression of the face was distinct, but when? Just then a sensation from the locket hanging on her neck recalled the whole, and the scene of her seventh birthday in her father's wood-lot spread before her mental vision. But this was far more substantial, and without any of the eerieness of that well-remembered scene.

"Yes, it is I, indeed, but I am now in the flesh, and not as then in the 'astral body.'" he said kindly, in answer to her quick, moving thought. "We are most glad to welcome thee to the Temple of the Brotherhood."

"How shall I know that this is right?" demanded Elsie.

"By this," was his reply, and he uttered a single syllable. To this the locket added a syllable, the brother another, and the locket completed the word.

Elsie seemed, by some recurring knowledge, to know that this was correct, and without hesitation entered the gate, which closed without noise behind them. Before them a long, broad passage stretched, wide enough to allow the two to walk abreast.

Taking his place by her side, he said: "You have been summoned and led hither, and you will be detained here three days."

"But what of my husband and his party?"

"They will be notified, and remain. They cannot go hence, as they could not have come hither, save by our permission. Make yourself easy, for you are where you have rights, based on obligation."

Leaving Elsie to go forward, let us return to the outer. As Mr. Clenham came back to camp with his party at the appointed time, he at once missed Elsie. Alarmed at her disappearance, he turned to his friends to say something, when, wheeling out of the heights beyond the mountain, sailed down a carrier-dove. Coming straight to him, it alighted on his arm. He saw a letter fastened around its neck. This he took from its resting-place. It was sealed with yellow wax, with blue characters upon it. Mr. Clenham did not break the seal, but, with his knife, cut around it, and, opening it, read as follows:

"TEMPLE OF THE GUARDIANS OF SECRETS, AND MASTERS OF POTENCY.

Full moon of the third month,
14,815 year of the Temple.

"To him who in loving kindness waits news from his comrade, greeting:—Rest quietly

with thine attendants for three days; at the end of that time she shall come to thee. Meanwhile she is safely attended within the Temple of the forgotten city, whose inhabitants worship the one God, and growing daily in perception, await the unfolding of Time, who will make them the teachers of what the world so hungers to know. Under the law, but one may enter. So the others must wait for the fulfillment. Be patient.

(Signed) THY BROTHER."

Mr. Clenham had, as we have already seen, the fullest confidence in Elsie and the invisible, and in the Most Ancient Wise Ones; but for all that it was a hard struggle to school himself for this task. He did accomplish it, however, and on the evening of the third day she suddenly stood in the midst of the waiting company, looking fresh and strong, but with a new expression of conscious knowledge, such as comes to all who make any effort at the unfolding of their spiritual natures. She was warmly greeted by her husband and by the rest of the company, as if she were one risen from the dead. They had all, even the humblest peon, become attached to her, for her uniform kindness of manner during the trip, and were ever ready to serve her to the extent of their ability.

"To-night we rest," she said; "to-morrow, at dawn, guides will come to us who will show us a shorter and easier route home than the way we came."

When questioned of what she had seen, or where she had been, she replied that she had been in the city, which did really exist. She was sure that when these people came out from their retreat, the oppression of man by his fellowmen, under the pretense of government, would cease forever. However, she refused to enter into details, putting off the inquirer in such a way that they were in no wise hurt, but really felt as if they had become responsible partners for the keeping of her secrets.

As the grey mists of morning grew clear, two stalwart Indians, mounted on wicked-looking little mustangs, rode out of the canon, and, making a sign of submission to Elsie, waited orders.

It was not long before the party was ready for their homeward route. The guides put themselves at the head of the train, and, with but little speech, directed its movement.

The whole journey was uneventful. There was nothing to disturb, although moving through the country of the most hostile In-

dian tribes, which, in going out, they had made a considerable detour to avoid. On the morning of the fifth day they found themselves on the great road leading from the south overlooking the fair City of Mexico, although it had taken them thirteen days to go. Here the guides turned back and left them.

One thing was strange about the whole matter. Every member of the entire party seemed under some sort of glamor. Old woodmen as some of them were, they were never able to tell how they came, nor did their stories on this point ever agree; nor did they appear anxious to return in that direction.

CHAPTER XVII.

RETURNED to their lodgings, Elsie and her husband rested quietly for about a month. Mr. Clenham had never asked her about her adventures, sure that whatever it was lawful for him to know she would tell him when the proper time came.

The evening when the moon fulled again they were sitting in their room at the hotel. The great waves of light rolled in upon them, as sitting side by side they enjoyed a quiet chat.

"Arthur," said Elsie, "I can tell you to-night whatever I may of my visit to the Temple, and of all the incidents connected therewith. Afterwards, I must forever hold my peace on this subject, for such is the law."

"You are perfectly free, as you know," he said, "to say or withhold; I have no desire for unlawful knowledge."

"Yes, I know," Elsie hastened to reply, "and it is because you understand, I am allowed to permit you to help me keep this knowledge, so listen."

Then commencing with her entrance into the mountain, and her recognition of her old friend already known to the reader, she continued:

"So we went on together for a long distance, the floor seemingly rising by a very gradual slope until I came to a curious flight of steps, which went up three steps to a landing, then five steps to another landing, and then seven steps. These were repeated in this order twenty-one times. On the top platform we stood just inside of a little window looking out over the city lying before and below. The immense plain was mountain-locked by huge and precipitous walls of rock that restrained those within, equally with warding off those from without. Almost in the center of the plateau was a great lake, with neither a visible inlet nor outlet, but at certain distances about the rocky inclosure huge tanks had been hewed out of the solid rocks. These were filled through earthen pipes with water drawn from the central lake by machinery moved by electricity, or some other force of which I have no knowledge. From these tanks the water was drawn off to supply the houses and irrigate the soil, which, originally sandy, is now blossoming with flowers, fruits and vegetables in the

greatest profusion. The streets all radiated from the lake at the center like the spokes of a wheel. The land seemed to be apportioned by measure, and the houses were in regular order. Never have I seen, nor do I ever expect to see anywhere else, such a scene of beauty, harmony and peace.

"'You see the type of the coming Sixth Race,' said my friend. 'Do you think there is anything in the outer world that can make us any better or happier?'

"I could make only one reply, and that was 'No.' I thought how woefully unlike this was to the outer world as we know it.

"'I should be pleased to show you the city at closer range, but our laws will not permit, so you must be content with this, and thus know that the resident members of the Brotherhood are performing their part of the mutual and universal obligation.'

"Turning, finally, from our point of view as the sinking sun announced the coming of the twilight, he led me to an inner room, where he left me for rest and refreshment.

"Two most beautiful girls of about twenty years of age came to attend me. They unbound and combed my hair, and bathed my face, hands and feet in cold water, and then

leaving me lying upon a couch, covered with a light, woven fabric, they brought me the most delicious bread, honey, grapes, oranges and fresh pomegranates, with some kind of a delicious acid drink.

"When I had fully satisfied my hunger—and I was hungry—they left me, smiling kindly back, and by signs wishing me pleasant sleep. So I lay down and slept until the bright sun, pouring into the window of my chamber, awakened me. By that I knew that it faced the east. Hardly was I fairly wide awake when my attendants of the night before came to me and assisted me to a bath of running water that was led through a tank cut in the solid rock. Thus refreshed and reclothed, they brought me refreshments, unleavened cakes, crisp and white, and tropical fruit. These were served upon plates of hammered gold.

"After I had finished, one of the girls went away, carrying the remnant of the repast, and the other sat with me awhile, talking by signs and rather as a matter of companionship than of the curiosity that might be expected under the circumstances.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BY and by my guide of the day before came, and his coming was announced by the ringing of a small bell in the air just above my head. The tone was silvery and clear, but there was no bell in the room. It was not a phantasy of my brain, either, for the maiden with me immediately arose, and, going to the silken hangings of the doorway, drew them aside and admitted him.

"Coming toward me, he bowed gravely, and said:

"'My brother, let the day bring thee but good. I am ordered by the Elder Brother to show you some portions of the Temple, and to give you instructions thereon, and also to bring to your knowledge some other matters of importance to yourself. Will you accompany me?'

"'Certainly, with the greatest pleasure,' I replied.

"So taking his courteously offered arm, we went forth into a great corrider running spirally around the outer edge of the mountain —inside, I should judge. Here we began a

long descent. The whole had been cut out of the solid rock, and was as light as if the daylight penetrated it. But I knew no ray of sunlight ever entered there through the thick, rocky ribs of the mountain. At last we came to a smaller corridor running at right angles to the greater. This ended in a large, circular hall, as if one stood inside of a hemisphere. As we went in, it was quite dusky, but at a word from my guide it all lighted up; then I saw that the whole polished surface was a model of the heavens, where the motion of the planets in their orbits could be studied.

"'This is our hall of object teaching, where we can study the combination of the stars before we verify them by the telescopes at the top of the Temple. All the motions of the planets are exactly imitated here, and we can better read and explain thus to our pupils from the city, than from books.'

"At various places about this hall were large alcoves. These were fitted up in the same way, with apparatus to illustrate the flow of the tides, and the movements of the waters to and from the sea; the formation of storms and tornadoes; the growth and development of animals and plants; the shifting of the centers of population. Here also was illustrated

the tidal waves of thought, by which mankind, while believing themselves masters, are controlled. In short, here was taught their pupils everything that can possibly concern our race. They did not blindly seek from varying effects the causes, but dealt boldly with the underlying principles of the universe.

"To me the strangest part was that I understood all his explanations as if I had once known all about the subjects he was talking about, and you know I never paid any special attention to them while at school. At last he asked me to go to his own laboratory. To this I consented. We returned to the corridor, and going up instead of down, finally came to a hexagonal-sided room on the western exposure of the mountain. You know we came up to the north side. Here on a little table carved of alabaster, we found a lunch waiting for us. My walk had given me a good appetite, and I did full justice to the viands. My host partook but sparingly.

"He explained to me that he had been charged by me in a former life with the keeping of my locket, which he had returned to me at the earliest opportunity. Its properties were that of an interpreter, just as the 'Urim and Thummim' of the Jews was an in-

terpreter to the priests of the ancient days. He told me all about the Black Brotherhood, whom I have told you about. He said that Black and White both handle the same power —one selfishly and the other unselfishly—but the Black can never conquer the White when it comes to a direct issue, although they may for awhile, by the help of ignorance and fear, enslave a portion of mankind.

"So we chatted all the long afternoon, until the setting sun approached the horizon. Then he accompanied me to my own chamber, and as we parted, he said: 'Take an early rest, for you will be called at the hour of the full moon. Be ready, and fear not.'

"Thus he left me once more in the hands of my fair hostesses. Having supped, they gave me a small confection of pleasant taste and fragrance. On eating it I felt strengthened and wonderfully reinvigorated—ready to face the world if need were. With this came also a feeling of restful harmony. They signed to me to rest, and, lying down, I almost immediately fell alseep.

CHAPTER XIX.

I DO not know how long I slept, but I was awakened by a light touch. Looking up I saw both my attendants standing by the side of my couch. Rising at once, I appareled myself, and when I was ready they threw over me an outer garment of white, and fitted upon the head a light headdress of some white material. Thus equipped, we stepped out into the main corridor and moved up, they going one upon each side, until we came to another passageway, where my companion of the previous day waited my coming. Here they left me, and I went forward with my guide for a short distance, when we came to a closed door. Here a challenge and a reply opened the way and we entered an anteroom. At the farther side of this room from the entrance I perceived another door, which, at our approach, slid back noiselessly, revealing forty-four persons seated in the form of an ellipse, facing the entrance, with one vacant chair. The arrangement of the seating was a central chair and four rows, two on each side, of eleven each. The outer rows were elevated

above the inner. All this I perceived by the flood of brilliant moonlight pouring in from an opening overhead, which, from the effect, must have contained optical mechanism of some kind. My guide conducted me to a small disc of glass inlaid upon the floor, and bidding me stand upon it, he made a sign of salutation to him who occupied the central seat, and then crossed over to the vacant seat. At a signal from the Elder Brother, they all stood up.

"Then, in a steady, sonorous voice, each word well-chosen to mean the exact thought expressed, he addressed me thus:

"'My brother, you have been summoned hither to consecrate your present incarnation to the cause so dear to us and to you, for this is our custom. That which is—not that which appears—is known to us of old as a brilliant and tireless student, and a most potent will. His loyalty to our order has never been for a moment questioned. In whatever form or clime he may exist, we know him for a brother. Lay your right hand upon the hilt of the physical symbol of power, your left hand upon your heart; repeat your name and say on after me.' He paused. A sword of flame came hilt toward me out of the moonlight, presenting itself to my hand. Following his instruction,

I laid my right hand upon the hilt, my left upon my heart; then, word by word, pledging the best effort of my present life to the service of the Brotherhood, I slowly followed his impressive utterance. This was succeeded by an obligation, that unspoken, unwhispered even, I must carry to the grave.

"Once more came the Brother's voice to me:

"'We have been trustees of possessions belonging to thee, waiting such time as thou would be fit and able to claim them. Into thy hands we now commit them, feeling that in thy hands they will forward the world's good. When the moon fulls again, the necessary details for lawful possession shall be placed in your hands. We do not doubt your use of it. You will be conducted whence you came, and rest until you rejoin your companion.'

"Here my guide came forward, and facing the silent ones, we retired into the ante-room, and thence to the place where my attendants waited. He bade me good-night, saying: 'I will come for thee at the sixth hour to-morrow.' Then the maidens and myself retiring to my chamber, they tenderly assisted me to disrobe, and left me for the night.

"It was past noon when I awoke the next day, but my hostesses seemed to be watching,

and came to me instantly. Leisurely I made my toilet, and then we sat together until my guide came for me, when, bidding them an affectionate farewell, I came with him to the outer entrance. Here he, too, said the parting words:

"'More than brother to me, it is not likely I shall see thee any more during this incarnation. Thy work lies outside of the Temple, that expiation may the more readily be accomplished. Say farewell, and close thine eyes.' This I did, and, instantly opening them again, I found myself with you."

Her husband had listened with the greatest interest, and was about to speak, when close to them stood a lithe, strong man, clad in ancient robes of a misty gray. Bowing, he said:

"The Elder Brother sends you these." At the same time he presented a packet of papers to Elsie, and disappeared as quietly as he had come.

Ringing for lights, on examination they found these papers to be a complete and perfect title, duly authenticated by the proper authorities to Elsie, of what has since proved to be one of the richest gold mines in Mexico.

They returned to Chicago in the early spring, where they settled permanently, deeming it the best center of their work.

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